

Friendship in Death:
IN
TWENTY LETTERS
FROM THE
DEAD TO THE LIVING.

To which are added,

LETTERS MORAL and ENTERTAINING, in PROSE and VERSE.

IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS ELISABETH ROWE.

E D I N B U R G H:

Printed in the Year MDCC LXXII.



T O
DR Y O U N G.

S I R,

I Have no design in this dedication, but to express my gratitude for the pleasure and advantage I have received from your poem on the LAST JUDGMENT, and the *Paraphrase on part of the book of Job*.

The author of these *Letters* is above any view of interest; and can have no prospect of reputation, resolving to be concealed. But if they prove serious entertainment to persons whose leisure hours are not always innocently employed, the end is fully answered.

The greatest infidel must own, there is at least as much probability in this scheme, as in that of the *Fairy Tales*; which, however visionary, are some of them moral and entertaining. I am,

S I R,

Your most humble servant, &c.

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T H E

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE drift of these letters is, to impress the notion of the soul's immortality; without which, all virtue and religion, with their temporal and eternal good consequences, must fall to the ground.

Some who pretend to have no scruples about the being of God, have yet their doubts about their own eternal existence, though valuable authors abound in Christian and Moral proofs of it.

But since no means should be left unattempted in a point of such importance, I hope, endeavouring to make the mind familiar with the thoughts of our future existence, and contract, as it were unawares, an habitual persuasion of it, by writings built on that foundation, and addressed to the affections and imagination, will not be thought improper, either as a doctrine, or amusement: amusement, for which the world makes by far the largest demand; and which, generally speaking, is nothing but an art of forgetting that immortality, the firm belief and advantageous contemplation of which this amusement would recommend.



T H E

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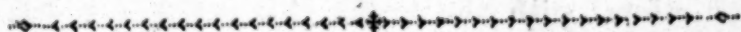
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LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD to the LIVING.



LETTER I.

To the Earl of R——, from Mr——, who had promised to appear to him after his death.

THIS will find you, my Lord, confirmed in your infidelity, by your late disappointment. It was not in my power to give you the evidence of a future state, which you desired, and I had rashly promised; but since this engagement was a secret to every mortal but ourselves, you must be assured, that this comes from your deceased friend, whose friendship you see has reached beyond the grave.

In my last sickness, we fixed on the time and place of my appearance. You was punctual to the appointment: for though I was not permitted to make myself visible, I had the curiosity to know if you had the resolution to attend the solemnity of a visit from the dead. The hour was come; the clock from a neighbouring steeple struck *one*; no human voice was heard to break the awful silence; the moon and stars shone clear in their midnight splendor, and glimmered through the trees, which, in lofty rows, led to the centre of a grove, where I was engaged to meet you.

I saw you enter the walks, with a careless incredulous air; not the least concern or expectation appeared in your looks; as if you came there only in regard to your own word, and a sort of respect to my memory. However, the calmness of the night induced you to walk till the morning began to break; when you retired, singing an idle song you had got out of the *Fairy Tales*. By the gaiety of your temper, you seemed pleased, my Lord, with a new proof against a future life, and happy to find yourself (as you concluded) on a level with the beasts that perish.—A glorious advantage! and worthy of your triumph!

But we have so often discoursed on this subject, that I would not tire you with the repetition of any thing past; only once more, to make way to your reason, by moving your passions, in recollecting the manner of your brother's death, which was all a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and to what heights of fortitude that prospect could raise the heart of man, at the hour of terror, and in the jaws of death.

With what a ready composure did he endure the violence of his distemper! with what conviction and full assurance expect the reward of his piety! with what a graceful resignation did he receive the sentence of death, when (at his importunity) the physicians told him there were no hopes of his recovery! "Then I have but a few weary steps," he replied, "and the journey of life will be finished."

This was not a time for affectation. All was open undissembled goodness, and a true greatness of mind. Nothing else could have supported him, when every circumstance of life conspired to allure him back to life, to deepen the shadows of the grave, and make the king of terrors more terrible.

There was not, my Lord, among the race of men,



men, a more lovely and agreeable person than your brother. His marriage was just concluded with the charming Cleora ; he had just finished a noble seat and fine gardens to receive her. When he was near death, she came at his request to take a last and sad farewell. Angels might have sorrowed to see tears in the brightest eyes on earth ; while her tenderness for him would have disguised her anguish. This, with the sight of a fond young sister, fainting in her woman's arms ; your aged father sitting near, silent, and stupid with his grief : what could support the mind of man in such complicated distress ! The accomplished youth, who had all that was gentle and humane in his disposition, must have betrayed some weakness, if he had not been assisted by a power superior to nature. But how equal, how steady was his mind ! how becoming, how graceful his whole behaviour ! Never was the last, the closing part of life performed with more decency and grandeur. His reason was clear and elevated ; and his words were the very language of immortality, and excited at the same time both *pity* and *envy* in those that were near him.

When the cold sweats hung on his brows, and his breath and speech failed, joy struggled through the decay of nature, and a heavenly smile sat on his face ; a smile that at once compelled our tears, and accused us of weakness in them.

You, my Lord, attended him to the last moment of life : and when I pressed this argument of a future state, you confessed, that though you thought religion a delusion, it was the most agreeable delusion in the world ; and that men who flattered themselves with those gay visions, had much the advantage of those that saw no-

thing before them but a gloomy uncertainty, or the dreadful hope of an annihilation.

From this uncertainty I was very solicitous to draw you, while I was in a mortal state; but I have now a more ardent desire to convince you, though I cannot obtain the permission to give you that evidence you requested. However, this letter may satisfy you that I am in a state of existence; nor is an apparition from the dead a greater miracle than a variety of objects that daily surround you, and owe the loss of their effect to your familiarity with them.

Happy minds in this superior state are still concerned for the welfare of mortals, and make a thousand kind visits to their friends; to whom, if the laws of the immaterial worlds did not forbid, it would be easy to make themselves visible, by the splendor of their own vehicles, and the command they have on the powers of material things, and the organs of sight. It often seems a miracle to us that you do not perceive us; for we are not absent from you by *places*, but by the different conditions of the *states* we are in.

You will find this in your closet, and may be assured it comes from

*Your constant
and immortal friend,
CLERIMONT.*

L E T T E R I I .

From a gentleman who died at Constantinople, to his friend in England, giving him an account of the manner of his death.

YOur not hearing from me, my dear Beville, has given you too many dismal apprehensions about the manner of my death; and the engagements of a generous friendship, which
are

are not extinguished with the breath of life, oblige me to give you this satisfaction.

I made a longer stay at Constantinople than I intended; and there it pleased Heaven, that I should resign my life; which, for some months, gradually declined; but without any violent or painful disorder, or indeed the least apprehension that my distemper was fatal. But my days were numbered; and when the destined hour drew near, after a sleepless night, I rose with the sun; and, as I had never been so ill as to confine myself, I sought some refreshment in one of those delicious gardens that adorn the shore of the Bosphorus.

After a short walk I found my spirits sinking; and retiring to a cypress shade, I threw myself on a flowery bank for some refreshment. A gentle slumber soon closed my eyes; which was thrice broken by what I then thought an imaginary call. The voice perfectly resembled the charming Almeria's, whose death, you know, was the occasion of my travels. I was now perfectly awake, and listening to hear the gentle summons again; but found I had neither strength to rise, nor power to call assistance. An icy coldness stopped the springs of life, and, after a little struggle, my spirit got unburdened of its clay; the curtain fell, and the invisible world appeared. The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these new regions, was the lovely Almeria. But how dazzling! how divinely fair! Ecstasy was in her eyes, and inexpressible pleasure in every smile! her mien and aspect more soft and propitious than ever was feigned by poets of their goddess of beauty and love. What was airy fiction *there*, was *here* all transporting reality. With an inimitable grace she received me into her æthereal chariot, which was sparkling sapphire, studded with gold. It rolled with a
spontaneous

spontaneous motion along the heavenly plains, and stopped at the Morning-star, our destined habitation. But how shall I describe this fair, this fragrant, this enchanting land of love! the delectable vales and flowery lawns; the myrtle shades and rosy bowers; the bright cascades and crystal rivulets rolling over orient pearls and sands of gold, which here spread their silent waves into broad transparent lakes, smooth as the face of heaven, and there break with rapid force through arching rocks of diamond and purple amethyst. Plants of immortal verdure creep up the sparkling cliffs, and adorn the prospect, with unspeakable variety.

Oh, my Beville! could I lead you through the luxurious bowers and soft recesses where Pleasure keeps its eternal festivals, and revels with guiltless and unmolested freedom! Whatever can raise desire, whatever can give delight, whatever can satisfy the soul, in all the boundless capacities of joy, is found here! Every wish is replenished with full draughts of vital pleasure, such as elevate angelic minds, and gratify the noblest faculties of immortal spirits. Oh, Beville! my Almeria is as much superior to her former self here, as I thought her superior to the rest of her sex upon earth.

ALTAMONT.

LETTER III.

To the Countess of —, from her only son, who died when he was two years old.

YOur grief is an allay to my happiness. The only sentiment my infant-state was conscious of, was a fondness for you; which was then pure instinct, and natural sympathy, but is now gratitude and filial affection. As soon

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soon as my spirit was released from its uneasy confinement, I found myself an active and reasonable being ; I was transported at the advantage and superior manner of my existence. The first reflection I made, was on my lovely benefactor ; for I knew you in that relation in my infant-state. But I was surprised to see you weeping over the little breathless form from which I thought myself so happily delivered, as if you had lamented my escape. The fair proportion, the agility, the splendor of the new vehicle that my spirit now informed, was so blessed an exchange, that I wondered at your grief ; for I was so little acquainted with the difference of material and immaterial bodies, that I thought myself as visible to your sight as you was to mine. I was exceedingly moved at your tears ; but was ignorant why ; unless because yours was the most beautiful face next to my guardian angel's I had ever seen, and that you resembled some of the gay forms that used to recreate my guiltless slumbers, and smile on me in gentle dreams. I was then ignorant of your maternal relation to me ; but remembered that you had been my refuge in all the little distresses of which I had but a faint notion. I left you unwillingly in the height of your calamity, to follow my radiant guide to a place of tranquillity and joy ; where I met thousands of happy spirits of my own order, who informed me of the history of my native world ; for whose inhabitants I have a peculiar benevolence, and cannot help interesting myself in their welfare. But as I never discerned between good and evil, nor experienced the motives that governed the race of men, I am, I confess, astonished at their conduct, and find their joys and sorrows to be all strange and unaccountable. I have made visits to the lower world since my decease.

decease. The first that I made, was from a tender curiosity to know if you was satisfied with the disposal of Heaven in my early fate ; but I was surpris'd to find, after several months were past, your grief oppress'd every thought, and clouded all the joys of your life, which made me very inquisitive into my own history. I ask'd the celestial who was your attendant, why I was so much lamented, and of what consequence my life would have been to the public, or my own family, since those fair eyes were yet drowned in tears for one that had made such a short and insignificant appearance below ? As for the public, the gentle minister told me there was a hazard ; I might have proved a blessing or curse ; but that I was the only hope of an illustrious family, and heir to a vast estate and distinguished title ; and pointing to a coat of arms, told me, *that* was the badge of my dignity ; the noble seat we had in view, with the gardens, fields, the woods, and parks that surrounded it, were all my entailed possession. A goodly possession ! I replied, and proper for the four-footed animals that I behold feeding on the verdant pasture ! But of what use these fields and woods had been to one that had an immortal spirit, I cannot conceive. And as for a title, what happiness could an airy syllable, an empty sound, bring with it ? The coat of arms I took for such a toy, that if burlesque had not been beneath the dignity of an angel, I should have thought the mentioning it a ridicule on mortal men. I cannot conceive wherein the charm, the gratification of these things consist. If I were possess'd of the whole earthly globe, what use could I make of this gross element, the dregs of the creation ? I have no dependence on water, or fire, or earth, or air. It is unintelligible to me, that hills and valleys, trees and rivers,

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the mines and caverns under their feet, any more than the clouds that fly over their heads, should be the wealth of reasonable creatures. They may keep their possessions unenvied by me; I am glad I did not live long enough to make so wrong a judgment, nor to acquire a relish for such low enjoyments. I am so little concerned for the loss of such an inheritance, that if the black prince of the airy regions claimed my share, I would not dispute his title, though he is my aversion, and your foe.

So superior, Madam, are my present circumstances to those of the greatest monarch under the sun, that all earthly grandeur is pageantry and farce, compared to the real, the innate dignity which I now possess. I am advanced to celestial glory, and triumph in the heights of immortal life and pleasure, whence pity falls on the kings of the earth.

If you could conceive my happiness, instead of the mournful solemnity with which you interred me, you would have celebrated my funeral rites with songs and festivals. Instead of the thoughtless thing you lately smiled on and caressed, I am now in the perfection of my being, in the elevation of reason; instead of a little extent of land, and the property of so much space to breathe in, I tread the starry pavement, make the circuit of the skies, and breathe the air of paradise. I am secure of eternal duration, and independent but on the Almighty, whom I love and adore, as the fountain of my being and blessedness.

Pardon me, Madam, it is you now seem the infant, and I repay you that superior regard and tenderness which you lately bestowed on me.

NARCISSUS.

L E T T E R I V .

*To my Lord ———, from a young lady who was in
a convent at Florence.*

MY Lord, finding materials in your closet, I took the opportunity of your absence to give you this intelligence of my death. The hand will convince you that it comes from your once loved Ethelinda.

I lived but a few weeks after you left Italy, such was the excess of my grief; though a strict modesty still forced me to conceal my unhappy passion from the most intimate companion I had. After I had discovered it to you, I durst confess the guilty secret to none, but the compassionate and forgiving powers above; who assisted my weakness, and confirmed my resolution never to comply with any of those schemes you proposed to free me from my confinement.

You had indeed convinced me, that the vows I had made were rash and uncommanded! But, oh! it was past; saints and angels heard it; the all-seeing skies were invoked to witness the chaste engagement: it was sealed above, and entered in the records of heaven. Thus hopeless was my passion! perjury and sacrilege stood in all their horrors before me, ruin and eternal perdition were betwixt us. And yet that I loved you, my Lord, I had too often subscribed to that soft confession to leave you any doubt of it. Nor was the tender frailty without excuse, if all the merit man could boast, if every grace that nature could give, or gentle art improve, deserved distinction. It had been a crime to to have been insensible in any circumstance but mine. — Strange circumstance! that could make it virtue to look coldly on you.

There

There was the emphasis of my misery : mine was a heart devoted to superior ardors, and sacred to Heaven alone ; that Heaven which is my impartial judge and witness how sincerely I strove to blot you from my soul. But neither reason, nor the nicest sense of honour, nor even devotion, could assist me ; still you returned on my imagination triumphant in all your charms. Hopeless of the conquest, I gave myself up to grief and despair, resolving never to attempt my escape from the holy retreat to which my vows had confined me, but rather to fall a victim to the sacred names of chastity and truth. Heaven accepted the sacrifice ; and death, my kind deliverer, at once released me from misery and mortality ; the crystal gates opened a spacious entrance, and the blessed immortals received me into the mansions of life and bliss.

Whatever was feigned of Elysian fields, and Cyprian groves, is here without delusion surpassed. These are the imperial seats, the native dominions of love. Here his holy torch flames out with propitious splendor, and his golden shafts are dipped in immortal joys. Here are no vows that tear us from our wishes, no conflict betwixt passion and virtue : what we like we admire ; what we admire we enjoy ; nor is it more our happiness than commendation so to do.

That unhappy passion which was my torment and crime, is now my glory and my boast ; nothing selfish or irregular, nothing that needs restraint or disguise, mingles with the noble ardor : it is all calm and beneficent, becoming the dignity of reason, and the grandeur of an immortal mind, and is as lasting as its essence. When the lamps of heaven are quenched, when the sun has burnt out its splendor, this di-

vine principle shall shine with undiminished lustre, the joy and triumph of the heavenly nations. The substance of love, my Lord, dwells in heaven, its shadow only is to be found upon earth.

ETHELINDA.

L E T T E R V .

To _____

YOU remember, as we were on a clear summer-evening, gazing on the beauty of the stars, I promised, if you survived me, to give you an account of the planetary worlds, and their inhabitants. I have not made half the tour of the skies; but will, if I can, describe to you the last of these novelties in which I entertained myself. It was in a region immense spaces distant from that system which is enlightened by your sun, and created numberless ages before the foundations of the earth were laid, and the measure thereof described, before the day-sprink knew its place, and the bounds of darkness were determined; before man was formed of the ground, and the Almighty breathed into him a living soul; an unmeasurable duration before this, the unlimited Creator had made and peopled millions of glorious worlds. The inhabitants of this which I am describing, stood their probation, and are confirmed in their original rectitude; but will never be admitted into the empyrean heaven, being incapable of that supreme degree of happiness which angels and the spirits of just men attain. However, they are exempt from all evil, blessed to the height of their faculties and conceptions, and are privileged with immortality. Their residence may properly be called *the enchanted world*.

Whatever

Whatever you have heard fabled of fairy scenes, of vocal groves, and palaces rising to magic sounds, is all real here, and performed by the easy and natural operations of these active spirits. I have in an instant seen palaces ascend to a majestic height, sparkling as the stars, and transparent as the unclouded æther. I might describe them like the courtly prophet: *Their walls were fair colours, their foundation sapphire, the windows of agate, and the gates of carbuncle.* Their materials here are all glittering and refined; not, like the earthly globe, dark and heavy. These æthereals are the nicest judges of symmetry and proportion; and, by the disposition of light and shade, and the mixture of a thousand dazzling colours, form the most charming prospects. They have such a command and knowledge of the powers of nature, that in an instant they raise a variety of sylvan scenes, and carry the perspective through verdant avenues, and flowery walks, to an unmeasurable length; while living fountains cast up their silver spouts, and form glittering arches among the trees, of growth and verdure not to be expressed.

They are acquainted with all the utmost mysteries of sound, and are possessed with the very soul of harmony. Art is theirs in all its changing notes, its blandishments, and graces. Whatever nature can boast in her wild licentious charms, is governed by them. The winding vales, the streams and groves breathe music at their command; the nightingale, and dying swan, seem to complain to gentle zephyrs whispering through the trees; while a thousand airy songsters warble to the measured fall of high cascades; which, by intervals sinking into a deep silence, after a graceful pause, shrill recorders and silver trumpets sound; while harmless
thunders

thunders roll above, and break with a glorious solemnity : still the blissful tempest rises, and swells the mind to sacred grandeur and seraphic elevation ; till subdued and melted into softness by the melody of tuneful reeds, warbling lutes, and sweet enchanting voices of the Lydian strain.

The language of this charming region is perfectly musical and elegant, and becoming the fair inhabitants, who are fresh and rosy as the opening morning, clear as the meridian light, and fragrant as the breath of jessamine, or new-blown roses. How exquisitely proportioned their shapes ! their aspect how transporting ! how gentle, how charming, beyond all the race of mortal men ! Never did the eyelids of the morning open on such perfection ; never did the sun, since first it journeyed through the skies, behold such beauty ; nor can human fancy, in its most inspired flights, conceive such amiable wonders.

Perhaps in all my planetary rambles, I shall not be able to give you an account of any objects more surprising : but while I am permitted, I shall continue my intelligence to the most agreeable friend I had on earth. And be assured, when you are released from mortality, you will meet in spite of distance of time and place, (those mortal foes to love upon earth),

Your constant and unchanged

JUNIUS.

LETTER VI.

To ———

MY dear sister, though the engagements of nature are cancelled, the superior obligations of virtue remain in their full force. You have

have been faithful to my memory, and the strictest rules of piety; though it has proved of fatal consequence to the unhappy man who was lately my husband, and by that relation a brother to you. With inward grief and compassion I saw the guilty inclination; but never uttered the least complaint, nor gave him one uneasy moment. I knew your mind as faultless as your form; and saw you governed in all your conduct by conscious honour, and unblemished virtue. Envy itself could not have reproached you with the least deviation from modesty and truth: nor was the promise I would have extorted from the guilty youth on my death-bed, the effect of jealousy; but a kind design to reclaim him, and free you from his importunity, if I could have engaged him, as I desired, not to converse with you after my decease. But he was sincere enough to refuse me; and as soon as a slight formality would suffer him, he pursued his incestuous passion. Your obstinate repulses have at last the tragical effect I expected. From the moment that he heard the day of your marriage with the illustrious Montandre was set, he resolved on the unnatural fact; and never was self-murder performed in a more calm and deliberate manner. He spent part of the evening with two of his friends, men of wit and learning: his discourse with them was all intended to prove the right a man has to dispose of his life, and put an end to his being, when it was rather his burden than happiness. He returned to his house in a more early hour than usual; and retiring to his chamber, called for a young and only daughter that I had left him. Taking her in his arms, while the lovely infant smiled on him, tears dropped from his eyes: when he would have blessed it, the unbelieving prayer faltered on his tongue; and delivering
the

the child to its nurse, he ordered his servants to deny him to all company. As soon as he was alone, he wrote that moving letter which you received. When he had finished and sealed it, he took a Lucretius from the table, and read and paused by intervals. At last, looking on his watch, just at *two*, he fastened his chamber-door, and drew his sword, repeating the following lines; which I wish had never been writ, as, I assure you, does the author of them too.

—“ Here’s a quick relief

“ To all thy vain imaginary grief!

“ For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,

“ And quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain.

“ The worst that can befall thee, measur’d right,

“ Is a sound slumber, and a long good-night.”

Then directing the point exactly to his heart, he fell on his sword, and immediately expired; and left a tender orphan friendless and exposed. This is the motive of my writing to you, that you would take the charge of her education, and protect her infant-innocence. Be sure to perform this generous office, as you would prosper, and be yourself protected in any of the calamities of human life. By desiring you to make all possible provision for her happiness, I present you with an opportunity of promoting your own.

AMANDA.

LETTER VII.

To ———

MY dear Emilia, it will be impossible for me to give you the intelligence I promised from the invisible regions, unless I could translate the language of paradise into that of mortals: for
here

here are a thousand beauties unrevealed, and a thousand delights unnamed among the race of men. We drink at the fountain-head of happiness, and bathe in the rivers of immortal pleasure; the sprightly hours dance along, crowned with love, and unutterable ecstasy.

You were witness to my dying agony; I saw your last kind tears, and gave up my breath in your arms. But how changed was the scene in a moment! from the gloom and horror of a death-bed, to the smiles and songs of angels, who conducted me to the æthærial heights! A thousand dazzling wonders met my view; the heavens in pomp unfolded their glories, the paradise of God opened before me in all its blissful and transporting scenes! The happy groves stood crowned with unfading verdure; the lucid currents danced along over sands of gold; the charming bowers displayed their ever-blooming pride, and breathed ambrosia; the palaces of the heavenly powers ascended with exquisite magnificence, sparkling far beyond all the glories of the lower skies, and resounded with the voice of festivity and joy.

The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these happy mansions was your charming brother, gay as a cherubim. The heavenly loves and graces triumphed in all his form; vital pleasure danced in his eyes; life and celestial bloom sat smiling on his face; a wreath of unfading flowers circled his head: and a golden lute was in his hand, whose harmony, joined to his melting voice, far surpassed all description. That tender innocent passion I had long conceived for him, kindled at the first interview, and has taken eternal possession of my soul.

But how shall I make you sensible of what an angel's flowing song, in all the pomp of heavenly harmony, would not fully describe! In

what figures of celestial eloquence shall I relate the loves of immortal spirits; or tell you the height, the extent, the fulness of their bliss! All the soft engagements on the earth, the tender sympathies, and the most holy union that nature knows, are but faint similitudes for the sanctity and grandeur of these divine enjoyments. Hope, and languishing expectation, are no more, and all desire is lost in full and complete fruition. Love reigns in eternal triumph; here it governs every heart, and dwells on every tongue.

They tune their golden harps to the great name
Of Love, immortal Love, their darling theme.
Ten thousand echoes thro' the lightsome plains
Repeat the clear, the sweet melodious strains.
The fields rejoice, the fragrant groves around
Blossom afresh at their enchanting sound.
The heav'n of heav'ns from dazzling heights
above

Returns the name, and hails the power of Love.

But oh! when the fair face of eternal Love unveils its original glories, and appears in the perfection of uncreated beauty, how wondrous, how ineffable the vision! Fulness of joy is in his presence, rapture and inexpressible ecstasy: the fairest seraph stops his lute, and with a graceful pause confesses the subject too great for his most exalted strain. How impetuously do the streams of immortal joy roll in, and enlarge the faculties of every heavenly mind!

Ye sacred mysteries, unrevealed to men; ye glories, unprofaned by mortal eyes, forgive the bold attempt that would describe you.—The only description that mortals can receive of you is, that you are not to be described.

DELIA.

L E T T E R

LETTER VIII.

To ———

WHEN you had just made me happy, and rewarded the most tender passion in the world with the possession of your charms, I was compelled to make a voyage to Spain. You saw the inward struggle of my soul, and that I must suffer the anguish of death in leaving you, when you surprised me with the unexpected generous offer, to follow me through all the dangers of the seas. Charmed with the proposal, I took you at your word, and rashly ventured my darling treasure to the hazards of a voyage. I lost my life in your defence against an Algerine corsair. The cause was just, and met with its approbation in the seats of peace and happiness. For my own lot, I could not wish it more advantageous; and for yours, such virtue in distress will be the peculiar care of Heaven. The barbarian that made you his prize, treated you with an unaccustomed gentleness; nor has the illustrious Bassa, that ransomed you out of his power at an immense price, given you the least occasion of reproach. In the height of his passion he has always observed even the sanctity of the Christian rules, and treated you with a submission very different from the principles and customs of his country. Though he has courted you to increase the number of his wives, he seems to have such an absolute command of himself, even in the warmth of his youthful desires, that you need fear no violence from the generous infidel. But should the worst you imagine arrive, Heaven has a thousand ways to protect your innocence. Depend on that; and let not the extravagance of your grief persuade you that it is lawful to free yourself by the fatal opiate which you keep for that design. The heavenly genii that attend you, have made a thousand im-

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pressions

pressions on your sleeping fancy, to warn you from the desperate attempt. Sometimes you have been led through the desolate shades where unhappy ghosts complain ; the gloomy caverns, the abodes of eternal horror, have been opened to your view ; sometimes the rewards of patience and constant virtue have displayed their glories to your pleased imagination ; and, by the soft inspiring whispers of celestial beings, your restless thoughts have been composed, while the realms of joy have unfolded their delights in visionary prospects to you. By heavenly scenes, and gentle slumbers, your griefs were calmed, the tempest of your passions suspended. Then quietly attend the event, and the gentle Calicara will find a way to free you. Till Abubecar saw you, she was his darling slave ; and as he is handsome to admiration, she loved and renounced the Christian faith for him : but still the fair apostate in her heart adores the name which her tongue has denied. This, though you are her rival, fills her soul with the softest compassion for you, and makes her abhor the task that her insolent master has imposed, of persuading you to quit the possession of the heavenly truth, which is your happiness and glory. She is so far from giving you that infernal counsel, that she has with tears and intreaties persuaded you to die, rather than abandon your glorious hopes, and title to immortality : nor will she rest till she has by some means or other secured you from Abubecar's importunity ; of complying with which she has experienced the delusive and bitter consequence.

Your coldness and aversion, with the ascendant her wit and vivacity has on his temper, will soon recover the youthful wanderer, and restore her to an absolute empire over him ; and then you are secure of a guiltless protection, till you can give your friends in England intelligence of your circumstances, who will soon pay your ransom ; which no one can for virtue lost.

In

In the mean time, if you love my memory, moderate the excess of your grief for my death; which, however tragical it appeared, was glorious and happy for me. I fell in the ardour of a brave action, in the defence of your beauty and liberty, and my own life. The wounds I received, gave a free passage to my soul; which took its flight with no other regret but that of parting with you, if it may be called a separation; for I have been your constant attendant in my invisible state, your unseen companion in the beautiful walks and bowers where you so frequently spend your hours of retirement. I should with pleasure hear you repeat my name, as I often do, and in the softest language express the constancy of a virtuous passion, could you restrain those floods of tears, and be more resigned to the will of Heaven. But let this assure you, that I am in the height of happiness; and when your life is finished, we shall meet to part no more: which circumstance though you, through your partiality for me, may too highly value, believe me, you will find it by much the smallest blessing of this place.

AMINTOR.

LETTER IX.

To Sylvia.

FROM the fragrant bowers, the ever-blooming fields, and lightsome regions of the Morning-Star, I wish health and every blessing to the charming Sylvia, the blessing of the earth!

I have a secret to reveal to you, of the greatest importance to your present and future happiness. You are as much a stranger to your own rank and circumstances as I was to mine till I came here; where I met a fair spirit, who informed me, that when she was a mortal I was her son, and not the heir of the Earl of ———, as was supposed; and that the Lord ——— is your own brother. It is necessary

necessary that you should know and discover this to him ; which will prevent that innocent fondness which he now indulges for you, from growing into a guilty passion.

You have been educated only as a dependent on the noble family you are in, and as a companion to the young ladies who are really your sisters. The mystery is this. My Lord, your father, had several daughters successively by the Countess your mother, but no lawful heir ; which made him fond of a natural son that he had by a mistress. His affection for him was so extravagant, that he contrived to settle his estate on him. This gave your mother such anxiety, that her jealousy and aversion to the youth put her on this rash design, when she was with child, to exchange it if it proved a daughter. My mother, who was married out of her service, and in whom she could entirely confide, was with child of me at the same time. Their time of delivery was very near together. My mother had a son, and you proved a daughter. The affair was managed with such dexterity, that I was exchanged, and passed without suspicion for the Countess's son ; and you was received by my mother, and supposed to be her daughter. Within a year the Countess had really a son ; but she dying as soon as she was delivered, the secret was undiscovered.

I lived a guiltless impostor till I was ten years old ; when a sudden decay withered my tender bloom. But, as I had been bred in the strictest notions of piety and truth, without any childish prejudices, or slavish fears, I expected my approaching end, whilst Death made his advances armed with a golden-headed dart. I had no notions of misery ; all my expectations were bright, though imperfect, of some paradise beyond the grave ; and closing my eyes, I fell asleep, and waked to immortal life and happiness. All that was past, looked like a dream, like an airy image, of I know not what. Some notion I had of a God, and my dependence

pendence on him; but how different from the illumination that broke in on my soul the moment it threw off its mortal veil! It was then I began to live and reflect; it was then I found myself a rational being, and looked back with contempt on the insignificant part I had been acting. The memory of my original follies, the childish baubles and toys that had just before been my diversion, would have given me some confusion, if my case had been singular: but I met thousands of gay spirits newly released, who had performed their short task, and finished their trifling farces of life; at the same time, transported at their present superior circumstances, they made the most agreeable reflections on their past state. What grandeur, what vivacity, what enlargement of their intellectual powers! how sparkling, how resembling the angels of God, their forms! while a perfect consciousness, and exact remembrance of what they were but a few moments past, raised their joy and gratitude to the height, and recommended heaven itself.

There was one circumstance in my early death that makes me look on it as a peculiar favour, in that I was removed by the just dispensation of Heaven, from the possession of what is, in the strictest equity, your brother's right. This reflection, from a principle of justice and truth, gave me an ineffable satisfaction; since, if I had lived, I had been the unhappy, though innocent, usurper of a rank and inheritance to which I had not the least real title. This, with a thousand other advantages, makes me bless the period that freed me from mortality; that happy moment that delivered me from ignorance and vanity; from the errors, the guilt, the miseries of human life; of which, though I had but little experience, I am now fully informed of the state of my fellow-creatures, and with what toil and hazard a longer course of years had been attended.

I remember no engagement to the world, but
my

my affection for you ; nor has death effaced the tender impression. But what was then a natural sympathy, is now a rational esteem. I view with pleasure your growing virtue, and frequent my native world for your sake. There was something perfectly engaging in the guiltless sorrow you expressed in my sickness ; and when my eyes were closed in death, you would have watched the breathless clay, in hopes to wake me from the fatal slumber again ; nor could the gloomy solemnity of a room of state deter you from paying your visits to the silent reliques. If any thing could have tempted me to wish myself a mortal again, it would have been the tender tears you shed for me. The only intervals of human life I review with pleasure, are the hours I spent with you. This gentle passion was the stamp of heaven on my soul, the first soft impression it received ; and it gains new energy in these happy regions of pure beneficence and love. This gives me a constant solicitude, while I see you on the borders of such a temptation. You are yet perfectly guiltless, and have done nothing unbecoming the sanctity of nature, and the chaste affection of a sister for a brother. But you are on the very limits of danger ; a step further, the least advance, involves you in sin and destruction. I know this discovery will give you a secret horror, and quench every kindling desire. The purity of your virtue will start at the enchanting error, that might have led you on to certain perdition : for young as you are, the contagious spark is ready to kindle, and the lovely boy appears more alluring. Your mutual conversation, and the early dawning of superior merit in both, endeared you to each other, by such sentiments as only noble and virtuous minds experience. But as a more late discovery might have been fatal to your innocence and peace, I impatiently attended an opportunity and method to make you sensible of your danger. I know, though I have been dead four years, you still re-
member

member me; and I have often heard you name me, and seen you with delight gazing on my picture. This made me resolve to appear to you, when I saw you. The first opportunity that pleased me, you were sitting, gazing at your own reflection; and sticking flowers in your hair, to adorn it for your young lover. I knew you had read of fairies, and looked at painted cupids with delight. In such a poetical form I thought you would have heard my story, and been pleased with my figure;

“ While youthful splendor lighten’d in my eyes,
 “ Clear as the smiling glory of the skies;
 “ Sprinkled with radiant gold, a purple hue
 “ My wings display’d, my robes celestial blue;
 “ More white than flax my curling tresses flow’d,
 “ My dimpled cheeks with rosy beauty glow’d.”

I could not have believed a form more gay than those that glittered on your fan could have decomposed you; but, to my surprise, I saw you faint away, before I had begun to speak to you. You soon recovered from the swoon; and returning to the house told a story, which you found nobody believed; so wise is the age in which you live, as not to be imposed on! You easily persuaded yourself it was no more than a dream. However, I durst attempt your courage no more, but give you this important information this way; which if you should not credit, you are undone. In this admonition your guardian angel joins with

ALEXIS.

LETTER X.

To Leonora.

YOur story of seeing an apparition in the garden, I perceive, has frightened your whole family; and not a mortal durst venture into the haunted walk, as they call it, after the sun sets, but your brother, to whom I have not the least in-

D

tention

tention to shew myself. It was only to you, my charming Leonora, the visit was designed. I flattered myself, your good sense, and uncommon presence of mind, would have guarded you from those unreasonable fears.

As I expected, the fine evening induced you to take your accustomed walk. The sun was hardly set, when you entered a long avenue of trees, that led to a green flowery arch, which looked on a sylvan palace. Here I seated myself in a human, and, as I thought, a very agreeable figure and dress; and as much as possible disguising the splendor of immortality, I imitated my mortal form; and so placed myself, that by seeing me at a distance, you might come nearer without surprise, or retire, if your courage failed. As soon as you perceived me, you stopped in some consternation; and seemed in suspense, whether you should go nearer, or make your retreat. I durst not rise, nor make the least offer to follow, for fear you should take your flight with too much speed and disorder; and as you found I was a very civil apparition, and would not intrude on your retirement, you went off with a sober and decent pace, often looking back to convince yourself that what you saw was real. As soon as you had reached the house, I shifted my material figure for one more becoming the dignity of the celestial condition: and being again invisible, I heard the fantastic relation you gave your brother; who told you it was all the effect of the spleen and obstinate grief you had indulged since my death. You still asserted the reality of what you told him; but he believed it no more than if he had heard it from the pulpit.

You might have dismissed every thought of fear. I would not have injured you when I was a mortal, liable to folly and error; much less in a state of perfection and happiness. There is not a spark of guilt or malignity left in virtuous minds, when released from their earthly prison: all is gentle and kind; and their concern for human welfare is infinitely

infinitely more tender and disinterested than before.

The terror with which men fly us, would have something in it incredible, if we did not remember our own original folly and ignorance ; but as we do, your strange apprehensions only divert and entertain us. If you thought justly, you would have more reason to run full speed from one another, than from us, who have neither permission nor inclination to injure ; but are ready to screen you in a thousand dangers, and to promote your interest with the most generous concern, while you are entirely ignorant of your benefactors. Were human organs more refined, and your perceptions heightened to a greater delicacy, you would see a thousand ethereal forms in the full bloom of immortal beauty and undecaying life ; not fashioned to give you terror, but love and delight.

You see, my dear Leonora, I would fain cure your prejudices, and reconcile you to the society of spirits ; that you may sometimes permit me to warn your unguarded years, when dangers and snares attend you.

You know your father left me the guardian of your fortune and beauty, so favourable was his opinion of me. This circumstance made me miserable, and at once cut off all my future views of happiness. I had indulged a secret passion for you, and flattered myself you had the same for me ; but as my birth and fortune were much inferior to yours, I was resolved rather to die than use the advantage that was in my power, or violate the sacred trust I had undertaken. By a thousand little soft inadvertencies you discovered your passion ; but, though secure of success, I durst not seduce you into a compliance of marriage so vastly below your high rank and character, nor take the advantage of betraying your thoughtless years to an action unbecoming your quality and fortune. My soul was unstained with any design that was

mean and selfish ; and the entire confidence your father had in my integrity and conduct, fixed my resolution of acting up to the severest rules of virtue and truth. But to what distress was I reduced ! I loved you to madness, while I never approached you but with a dissembled indifference. This restraint, and the constant agitation of my thoughts, disordered my health ; and threw me into a violent fever, which soon finished my life. The justice and fidelity of my conduct found its immense reward ; and left me nothing to repent of, but the giving my trust entirely to your brother's care, whose licentious manners will expose you to a thousand dangers. To repair this negligence, I would fain have induced you to a conversation, that might have directed your conduct, and fortified your virtue by my friendly admonition. But since your fears put it out of my power ever to be visible to you again, I must take this way to convince you how unchangeable my concern for your happiness is. Oh let it not be dearer to me than it is to yourself !

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XI.

To the same.

I Leave your fellow-mortals to congratulate your recovery ; but I must own it was a disappointment to me. You were on the confines of immortality. The angels, who are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, had prepared their song of triumph to receive you ; I had wreathed a garland of the fairest flowers that bloomed in the paradise of God, to crown such early and distinguished virtue ; with impatience I numbered your moments, and expected every one would be your last : the sparkling vivacity of your eyes expired, the roses on your cheeks vanished into a mortal paleness, and the springs of life seemed just ready to cease their motion ; when he who governs nature with

a supreme command, restored you back to health. Your recovery was surprising even to angels; who, though ignorant of the various limits the Sovereign Disposer has set to human life, yet often make exact conjectures of the course of second causes, and the period of mortal lives. You are certainly given back as a blessing to the world: your example may yet make a thousand proselytes to virtue. But for my part, nothing but the will of Heaven could reconcile me to this dispensation; when you was just in the harbour, to be tossed back again on the tempestuous ocean; when you had welcomed death, as your kind deliverer, ready to free you from Cassander's importunity, and your brother's tyranny, who will do his utmost to compel you to this detestable marriage. But your constancy to refuse it is of the highest importance to your present and future happiness. He is already married, under a borrowed name, to a young and beautiful Italian, whom he stole from her parents; and after he had lived two months concealed with her, the perjured man left and abandoned her to misery. In the height of her anguish she put herself into a nunnery, where she wastes her days in a reluctant and unprofitable devotion: for true religion cannot exist but by our choice; necessity can give nothing but the appearance of it.

This is a secret, of which you would never have been informed by any human means. If you discover it to your brother, it will deliver you from the violence which he is determined to use, to force you to wed Cassander, another name for *misery*.

It is a disinterested concern for you, that makes me give you this advice. There is no jealousy in heavenly minds. They know their pre-eminence; and should they appear in their celestial splendor, the most perfect beauty of the children of men would wither in their presence. But vanity and emulation are no more, and all selfish designs are unknown in these happy continents.

You may, by making a proper use of this notice,
provide

provide for your own happiness; but, blessed be the great Author of all good! you cannot add to mine.

CLERIMONT.

LETTER XII.

To my dear Brother.

YOUR friend, the unhappy Carlos, died this night at Naples. I was willing to surprise you with this intelligence, in a way which no human speed can reach.

I wish my endeavours for your reformation may have more success now, than they had when I was in a state of mortality. I am persuaded, if you had seen the exit of the wretched youth, who had been the companion of your riots, it would have convinced you of the falsehood of his principles; and how little support the thoughts of falling back into his original nothing gave him, when the gloomy hour approached, in which he was to lose the sight of the sun and stars, with all the visible beauties of nature for ever.

To be insensible! to be no more! to find his eyes closing in an eternal sleep! gave him inexpressible horrors. But if this was the worst that he apprehended, never did mortal give up his life in a manner more cowardly and inconsistent. He durst not bear darkness or solitude one moment: he started at a shadow, and shewed a more than childish fear and weakness in his actions! he even begged his physicians to flatter him with the hopes of life, and not let him know if they thought his case desperate: he charged his attendant not to mention death or the grave, nor to speak a serious word in his hearing. Though his affairs were in the utmost disorder, no person durst venture to advise him to settle them by a will. But all these cautions gave him no relief; the anguish, the guilt, the confusion of his mind, was visible in his looks. The abandoned Amoret, who had follow-
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ed him in the disguise of a page, was seldom permitted to see him; and whenever she approached him, he trembled and fell into the greatest agonies, closed his eyes, or turned them from her: but spoke nothing to support her in the distress he had brought on her; nor expressed the least remorse for having seduced her to leave the noble Sebastian, to whom she was engaged by marriage-vows, and a thousand tender obligations. His peevishness and impatience were insufferable, and even despicable to own his servants. When the medicines he took had not their expected success, he reproached his physicians with negligence, or want of skill; and yet by intervals implored their assistance, as if his being itself depended on their art. His senses were perfect to the last gasp. With amazement he saw the universal terror make its slow and dreadful approaches; and, after a tedious and painful struggle, yielded to the gloomy conqueror, and with a deep groan gave up his breath, and went to make the great experiment.

I hope this account of your friend's death will have the happy effect I designed it, and make you recollect the counsel I gave you with my dying breath;——the best legacy I could bequeath, if I had had empires to dispose of.

My dear brother, I can have no selfish motives now, in endeavouring to reclaim your extravagancies. In this superior state, my concern for your happiness must be all abstract and generous. The acknowledgments of indigent miserable mortals, signify nothing to spirits exalted to celestial dignities, in the full enjoyment of immortal pleasures: but this gives them the most kind and beneficent dispositions to erring men, whom they would fain allure into the paths that lead to happiness. Those glimmering sparks of goodness and amity, which, in your cold regions, are but just dawning in virtuous minds, in these warmer climates acquire new ardour, and burn with eternal splendor,

I have more zeal than ever for your interest; and let me recal, but not reproach you with the obligations you have to pay some regard to my advice. You know, when we lost the best of parents, that he left his whole estate to my disposal, with such a moderate fortune to your share, as must have restrained your wild expences: but when I found you had some sense of your folly, in hopes to reform you by generous treatment, I immediately settled on you half the vast fortune that was in my power. I will not urge my venturing my life in your defence, when assaulted in our travels; for this was but an action of humanity, which every brave man owes to a perfect stranger. But I must insist on the merit of resigning my pretensions to the lovely Bellamira for you. She was all the joy, the hope, I had on earth: I loved her as I loved virtue and happiness: and yet, when you discovered to me the anguish and disorder of your mind, and your violent passion for her, I made a retreat, and left the weeping beauty to reproach me with a levity and indifference to which my heart was a stranger; disguised my tender inclination, and pleaded yours with such success, that she yielded to your request, and gave her matchless charms and immense fortune to your possession.

But this advantageous match had not the effect I hoped, nor was the least restraint to your licentious manner of life. You acted a shameful part in assisting Carlos in his affair with Amoret; and a more shameful one in promising to protect and support her if he abandoned her, when you knew what repeated favours you had received from the injured and generous Sebastian. Your treacherous and ingrateful treatment of a man of his exalted merit, fills me with the greatest remorse and confusion. A thousand and a thousand times have I reproached myself for having been the unhappy instrument of Bellamira's ruin; who pined beneath her grief like a fair flower blasted in its prime. I
never

never met her eyes, but she might have seen the remorse and confusion of my soul. The negligence and contempt with which you treated the best of women, sunk my youthful spirits, damped my noblest designs, and clouded the gayest season of my life. While death made its slow and silent approaches, the last favour I begged of you was to be just to your unhappy wife, in breaking all engagements with the lewd and infamous Amoret. This you promised me with a religious solemnity. But I know her present distress (though the just effect and reward of her crimes) will be your snare. She is all enchantment, and will, I fear, be your ruin. But, if you reject my advice, take this caution from the royal penitent, *Her house is the way to death, and her gates lead down to hell.* And I desire you to consider seriously, that this admonition must *rescue* you from, or *double* your guilt.

CLEANDER.

LETTER XIII.

To ———

HOWEVER different my present manner of existence is from my former state, my affection to the fair Climene is unchanged. As I live and act in a way inexpressibly superior to mortal life, so the beneficent dispositions of my nature rise to a more noble and generous height. My concern for your happiness is more tender and disinterested than ever. I have guarded your nightly slumbers, waited on your solitary walks, and followed you like your attendant angel; who, pleased with my officious care, has often left you to my charge. Your present danger gives me as much anxiety as consists with a state of happiness. I could not refrain from giving you this warning; which, to your surprise, you will find on your toilet, among trifles the most its reverse.

You are, O too credulous fair! on the very brink

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of

of ruin. Treachery and delusion are in Alcander's eyes and tongue ; and if you keep this night's appointment with him, you are undone. Infamy and perdition are before you. The evil genii that envy the happiness of the human race, already insult my pious care ; and your celestial guardian seems half resolved to quit his trust. The tender grief hangs on his beautiful face, like a cloud on the rosy morning, and, in the deepest silence of the night, when the creation seemed lulled in an universal slumber, in the gloom of a neighbouring grove that you often frequent, I heard him tune his silver lute, to strains soft and languishing, as those in which the heavenly ministers mourned the loss of paradise, and the bold transgression of the first woman that fell. And yours, unhappy maid ! will be a fall from the heights of honour, from the very triumph of virtue. What can man believe ! what can the sex boast, when such innocence, such truth, such modesty as yours, are perverted ? Vice will insult to find Climene among her votaries, and hardly believe her own conquest ; surpris'd like the barbarous Gauls in the Roman senate, who thought it an assembly of gods, till they saw them bleed.

With what a profligate air, with what insolent vanity, did your young seducer leave you last night ! how proud of his unexpected success, when he had gained your consent to the guilty assignation ! I staid with you an unseen witness of the remorse and confusion in which he left you. How disordered ! how uneasy ! how unlike yourself did you appear ! It was your usual hour of devotion ! A Bible lay near, which you took in your hand, but durst not open, for fear the sanctity of its rules should reproach you. The distraction of your thoughts gave me hopes, that you would recover yourself, and break the guilty engagement you had made. To confirm your doubtful virtue I was on the point of making myself visible ; but the unaccountable fear that mortals have of the inhabitants of the immaterial worlds restrained me,

me, lest the effect should have been fatal to your timorous temper, however gentle and propitious my appearance and address had been. And I thought this letter might less surprise, and more calmly persuade you.

You have yet a few hours to recollect yourself. And sure you will not give up an unblemished reputation, with all the peace and innocence of your mind, to this blind extravagant passion! Besides the injustice to the unhappy Sylvia, to whom Alcander is engaged by a thousand vows, and who now pines away in obscurity, a victim to his falsehood and perjury. Be virtuous and compassionate; be kind to her, and just to yourself.

After this warning, even from the dead, your crime will be aggravated. You must deliberately venture on perdition, and damn yourself with design and sober reflection. You must desperately give up your title to celestial happiness; to the worlds of life and pleasure, of immortal beauty and youth. Oh, how superior to that with which you are at this instant so fatally enamoured below!

LETTER XIV.

To ———

MY dear sister, I have often, since I left the world, had the privilege to supply the place of your guardian angel. I have been an invisible witness of your tears for my death; and to allay the excess of your grief for me, I have been at last permitted to let you know that I am happy.

I can give you no account how my soul was released. I fell asleep in perfect health, with an unusual serenity of mind; and, from the gentlest slumbers of innocence and peace, awaked in immortal bliss. (How common is sudden death!) I found myself in a moment got above the stars, and outshining the sun in its meridian splendor. Corruption had put on incorruption, and mortality

ty was swallowed up of life and immortality. O death! I cried in the exaltation of my thoughts, O death! where is thy conquest? O king of terrors! where is thy boasted victory? where is thy sceptre and imperial horrors, thy gloomy state, and dreadful attendants? Where are thy vast dominions, the cheerless and formless darkness, the shade and the emptiness, the seats of corruption and decay? The spell is broken! the enchantment is dissolved! the shadows, the phantoms, the visionary terrors fly! the celestial morning dawns, and charming scenes arise. But, oh! how boundless, how various, how transporting the prospect!

Still lost in joy and wonder, Tell me, said I, ye angels, ye smiling forms that surround me, what easy passage has my spirit found from its mortal prison? what gentle hand has unlocked my earthly fetters, and brought me out of darkness and confinement into immense light and liberty? Who was the kind messenger that conveyed the welcome invitation to my ear? What melodious voice called me away from yonder cold tempestuous regions, to these soft and peaceful habitations? How have I found my passage through the trackless æther, and gained the summit of the everlasting hills? Am I awake? Do I dream? Is this a gay, a flattering vision? Oh, no! it is all blissful and transporting certainty! I see, I hear things unutterable, such as never entered into the heart of mortal man to conceive. — Read, and believe; believe, and be happy.

You see, my dear sister, how blindly you repine at the decrees of heaven, and how unreasonably you lament what you call my early and untimely fate. Could I be happy too soon? I left the world indeed in the full pride of my youthful years, in the height of greatness and reputation, surrounded with the blandishments and flatteries of pleasure. But these advantages might have been fatal snares to my virtue in a longer trial. It was indulgent in Heaven, after a short probation, to

crown me with the rewards of victory. It is past the toil, the danger; and all to come is endless peace and triumph.

If you could see as far into futurity now, and think as justly of it as you will certainly do on your death-bed, this letter from me had been superfluous. I only can *design* it beneficial; you may *make* it so.

LETTER XV.

To ———

IT is past! the voyage of life is finished! Instead of informing you that I am arrived at the Indian coasts, this is to let you know that I am safely landed on the celestial shores. The vessel in which I was embarked, by a tempest, sunk to the bottom of the ocean, and the angel of the waters received my newly unembodied soul.

I was surprised at the different manner of my existence. I breathed indeed no longer; but I lived, I heard, I saw, with a more exquisite sense than before. But a few moments were past since the raging billows carried destruction in their appearance; and now I moved unterrified through the deeps, and surveyed the foundation of the ancient hills. The regent of the waters, pleased with my curiosity, led me through his chrystal palaces and coral groves; shewed me the pearly grottoes and alcoves of amber, with a thousand wonders, kept secret from the race of men since the bases of the mountains were laid.

As soon as I had gone the round of the liquid regions, an æthereal messenger took me under his conduct. I followed my gentle guide through the airy spaces; and here all was novelty and surprize. I made the tour of the universe, and explored the limits of the creation with unspeakable agility. I moved from star to star, and met ten thousand suns blazing in full glory without fear or consternation. I followed the track of prodigious

gious comets that drew their flaming tails over half the sky. From the planetary regions I ascended, with the ease and swiftness of a thought, to the superior heaven, the imperial palace of the Most High. But here description fails, and all beyond is unutterable.

This is the only account you can possibly receive of my death, which your own fears had so truly presaged at our parting. And this, my much loved Henrietta, I hope, will put an end to all your anxiety; for since the change is proved so happy for me, you are too much my friend to be concerned thereat.

PHILANDER.

LETTER XVI.

To my Lord ———

My dear brother,

AS immaterial beings mingle unseen in what society they please, I had the curiosity last night to know your thoughts of what had happened to you the night before; and I heard you make a very gay declamation to some of your free companions, on the power of fancy, and the strength of your own imagination. But really, my Lord, you are not so visionary and extravagant as you represented yourself. There is nothing more certain than what you saw and heard; and you might have credited your senses without so much diffidence and modesty, which you turn into a vice.

You have but a few weeks, my dear brother, to live: your sands are numbered, and your last hour is determined. I obtained a permission, seldom allowed, to give you some warning of your approaching fate. I chose the opportunity, when I found you, in a clear moon-light night, sitting in a pensive posture by the side of a fountain in your garden. To gain credit to my message, I stood before you in the splendor of a heavenly form, and the bloom of immortal beauty; but so resembling

resembling my former self, that, in your surprise, you called me sister, and stepped forward to embrace me. I durst not profane myself by a mortal touch; but, eluding your arms, placed myself before you on the opposite side of the canal. I stood silent some time that you might be recollected; and then setting a golden lute, which I had in my hand, to one of the melodious strains which angels sing to expiring saints, when they would soften the agonies of death, and make its terrors smile; in those languishing and melting notes I gave you an invitation to the starry mansions, believing this would have a much better effect than any thing terrible to one of your undaunted temper. I delivered my message, and in an instant disappeared.

I have repeated these circumstances to you, as a proof that all was real, and neither a dream nor a waking *reverie*, as you have persuaded yourself. But since no mortal knows this but yourself, and you concealed the greatest part of this relation from your gay friends, when you was so eloquent on the wonders of imagination; I hope this will find its wished success, and put you on the most exact preparation to meet, with a Christian fortitude, the greatest terror that mortal man can encounter. Though your life has been unstained with any base or unjust action, there are some levities in your conversation that require your speedy penitence and reformation; or seeming trifles will enlarge themselves into the greatest terrors.

It is a serious thing, my Lord, to die. You thought so, when, with the most tender concern, you saw me shivering and pale, anxious and fearful, on the very borders of death, doubtful to enter, and terrified at the darkness that hung on the gloomy valley; when even the follies of my childhood, which was hardly past, and the slightest errors of my youth, sat heavy on my soul. And, oh! how unwillingly did my soul quit its agreeable mansion! how many soft engagements made me fond

fond of life! the charming youth to whom I was contracted by my parents, detained me with his tears. Had angels beckoned me to the skies, that melting language would have tempted me back.

You little think, my dear brother, what regularity of the passions, what sanctity of manners, are necessary to take off the horrors of death, and make that gloomy monarch wear a smiling aspect.

Take this friendly admonition, and be for ever happy. Then will that relation which is now between us, still subsist; and I shall be, in joys inexpressible, your sister to all eternity.

SERENA.

LETTER XVII.

To Philocles, from Ibrahim, a Turkish Bassa.

IT was you, my dear Philocles, that Heaven made the instrument of my conversion to Christianity. But while I was in a state of mortality, it was impossible for me to know the greatness of my obligations to you, and to what height of felicity your friendly instructions directed me. How low, how disproportioned were my expectations to the grandeur of my present happiness! How superior is it even to those noble ideas your description gave me of celestial joys! As you converted me to, let me establish you in, the only true religion.

What reason have I to bless the moment that began our acquaintance, and the event that placed your character to my view in such an agreeable light! There was indeed something in your whole conduct so artless, so sincere, so conformable to the strictest rules of truth and justice, that I at once quitted my prejudices to the faith you avowed. The Christian (which is not always the case) recommended Christianity.

The negotiations I had with you when you were consul for the states of Holland at Smyrna, gave me numerous instances of your honest and generous disposition. But nothing surprised me more, than
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seeing you venture your life in a dreadful storm, to save a Portuguese, your mortal enemy, whose vessel was just overset, and himself ready to sink amidst the threatening waves, which he, till then, imagined less his foe than yourself. I was witness to the god like action ; and immediately concluded that there must be something divine in a religion, that could raise human nature to such an height of beneficence. It was all resistless conviction ; my soul confessed its force, while I considered with what a becoming modesty you received the acknowledgments of your adversary, as calmly as for some trifling favour you would have accepted the thanks of your sincerest friend. You seemed conscious of having done nothing extraordinary ; nothing but what was suitable to the constant disposition of your mind, if Heaven had favoured you with more frequent occasions of performing such heroic actions. You have a sense to make what is heroic, *common*.

It was a charity truly divine, that made you hazard your life, and expose it to the worst of torments, to rescue me from error. I was more inquisitive than the laws of the Alcoran allowed ; which induced me to seek so many opportunities of conversing with you. Without the least caution, or regard to your own safety, you left yourself to the mercy of an infidel, satisfied my scruples, and importuned me to quit the Mahometan faith. Your conduct was all demonstration ; and convinced me, that nothing but heavenly truth could inspire you with such fortitude, and kindle in your soul a charity so perfectly disinterested. I was soon vanquished, and became a joyful proselyte to the Christian principles ; nor found the least regret in leaving my native soil, to follow you to the Hague, where I might openly profess the faith I had embraced, and be in the right with impunity.

It was not long before a fever seized me. When I found the symptoms mortal, I sent for you to ease my burthened soul of the only care that oppressed it ; but before you came, my speech was lost.

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However, the discovery was of such importance, that it still engages my concern ; nor is there any person whose fidelity I can depend on like yours.

I purchased a beautiful Grecian slave, the first and only object of my love. Though she was in my power, I only attempted, by gentle methods, to gain her affections ; but in vain. Her Christian belief still set the view of future rewards and punishments before her, and checked her soft inclinations. To conquer her virtue, I was induced to pervert her to the doctrines of the Alcoran. As absurdly as I reasoned, she was soon convinced, that her soul was as perishing as her body ; and that there was no prospect of immortality for any of her sex ; that present joys were all she could expect ; and, in losing youth, and love, she lost the highest end of her creation. Too soon the fair apostate believed my detested doctrines, and took the poison from my tongue ; renounced the great Messiah, and embraced the idle dreams of an impostor ; gave up her claim to immortality, and yielded herself to my licentious wishes. Thus free from the restraints of religion, the fair libertine grew dissolute and profane beyond the limits of her sex. Her sportive wit, and boundless vanity, now ridiculed all that she once thought sacred. There was something so wild, so unnatural in her impiety, that I half repented my success ; but never was truly sensible of the injury I had done her, till I was convinced of the truth of Christianity. It is this unspeakable damage that I hope you will find some method to repair. It will not be impossible, by some of your friends, to find access to her. She is now at my brother's disposal. Her ransom will be easy, and a charity worthy your character. Your *charity* will redeem her person, your *example* her mind, from a more deplorable slavery.

IBRAHIM.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

To a son, from his deceased father.

IF there is the least spark of filial gratitude in your breast ; if there is any deference due to the memory of a once indulgent father, I charge you to recall the challenge you have sent — What shall I say ? — not to your adversary, but to your generous, your well-meaning friend. His admonitions were just ; and the relation he gave you undoubted fact. You know in your conscience, the woman you vindicate has neither virtue nor reputation to defend ; while you are daring death, and all the horrors that ensue, to justify a known falsehood, and purchase *shame* with *heaven*.

If you are killed in this mad duel, the moment you breathe your last you will mingle with a society that make very different judgments of things, from what pass for maxims of honour among mortals. You will appear with a very ill grace, and on a most impertinent occasion, among the spirits of darkness, to whom you will be an eternal object of derision. The boasted beauty and charms of your mistress, will be but a poor excuse for your gallantry, though you should tell them in heroics, *how the world has been lost for a woman*.

These extravagancies will vanish with mortality : death will draw the veil, and place more serious scenes in view. You will find how cheaply you have sold immortal glory ; and curse the fond enchantment that led you on to destruction ; detesting that most, the love of which is now your inducement to ruin.

But ask yourself, What is the virtue of this fine lady, in defence of whom you are going with such bravery to die ? What is this honour you are giving up your life, and all your hopes of salvation, to maintain ? This guiltless lovely woman is only perjured to her marriage-vows : this angel, this divine creature, does but deceive, does but expose to infamy, the best of husbands ; she does but

return his unequalled tenderness and constant affection to her, with artful fondness, and dissembled complaisance. She is but insensible to the merit of a man who is his country's ornament and pride ; a person of the most graceful appearance, by nature formed to please the nicest of the fair sex ; liberal and magnificent, obliging and sincere above all disguise ; and who, from his own conscious honour, entirely confides in this artful woman, whom he raised from distress and obscurity. Charmed with her beauty and dissembled affection for him, he has indulged all her wild ambition, gratified her boundless vanity, and set no more limits to her expences, than you now to your folly.

This is the unhappy man you would expose to the jest of every senseless rake, by a public quarrel for the reputation of his wife. What *enmity* could be so cruel as this *defence* !

And this is the dear innocent charmer, whose virtue you would justify, even by damning yourself, and murdering the generous Lindamor, your best, your experienced friend, whose sincerity has been his only crime. Be not so shamefully valiant. With what confusion must you draw your sword on a man, to whom you have such a series of obligations ? How often has he supplied the necessities to which your extravagant gaming has reduced you, and discharged your debts of honour, as you call them ? And what was his offence now, but setting the character of an infamous woman in its true light, with a kind intention to reclaim you from your dotage ?

What a fatal influence has this dissolute passion had on your mind ! How profligate your manners ! How unlike to the first part of your life, when a noble inclination governed your soul, and the lovely Erminia was all your joy ! Oh ! may her youthful charms recover you, and animate your mind to glorious actions ! Your king, your country, the Protestant cause, the rights and liberties of human nature, now require your courage, and find better employment for your sword than to assassinate

pate your friends. If you are trully brave, have the *courage* to submit ; the only way to conquer him.

EUSEBIUS.

LETTER XIX.

To my Lord ———, from his deceased wife.

YOUR present confinement by a slow recovery from a dangerous sickness, makes me to hope this may prove a time to prevail with you to pity the injured Sylviana, and be just to your obligations to her.

You once loved me, my Lord ; and, while I lived, the guiltless passion had an effect on your whole conduct. But your grief for me gave a very extravagant turn to your mind ; and, instead of leading you to a superior, a reasonable happiness, you have abandoned yourself to the heights of sensuality. You have pursued pleasure in every tempting disguise, refined on vice, and turned it into a science ; and are too truly learned in it. Your stately rooms have sounded with nightly revels, and loose enchanting songs ; your groves and fragrant gardens have been devoted to luxury, and infamous delights ; the shades and fountains have been witness to scenes unbecoming their chaste retreats ; you have found out new ways to perdition, and set no limits to your dissolute inclinations, which survive *satiety* itself.

But, under this gay disguise, this triumph of vanity and madness, you have not known an interval of happiness that has been sincere. You could not conquer your own good sense, nor wholly forget the restraints of a noble education. I have been witness to your secret remorse, your penitent soliloquies : I have seen you recollect yourself, assume your native greatness ; heard you, with the most moving eloquence, lament your folly, and assent to all the rules of temperance and virtue, assent to, and violate the same hour.

You have relapsed to your usual extravagance,
till

till this dangerous sickness set the terrors of death in your view. It was then you confessed your injustice to the charming Sylviana. It hung on your soul, and appeared with a thousand aggravations. Nor will you ever know peace till you have confirmed your vows, and the absolute obligations you are under to marry her. Obligations to be happy, methinks, should be easily complied with.

How happy was the lovely maid in her humble circumstances! how blessed in her spotless innocence! till chance (in your rural excursions) led you in a luckless hour to the verdant shade, where you found her retired to screen herself from the mid-day sun, unmolested with the cares of love or ambition.

The natural elegance, the modesty, and easiness of her behaviour, fired your thoughts; and partly by violence, and partly with the most solemn vows of marriage, you ruined her.

But what unaffected sorrow, what remorse that fatal moment cost her, you have often witnessed. With what graceful pride has she since refused the least favour, and been inflexible to your softest persuasions on any terms but the marriage you promised her? How moving have her tears been! how just her complaints! what a pomp of virtue, what a conscious greatness has appeared in her aspect, when, by your artful addresses, you have again endeavoured to seduce her! Nor presents, nor equipage, nor the most profuse settlement you have offered her, has tempted her to act in any character, but what virtue might own, in the view of heaven and the world. Her very crime with you should have the force of virtue in it.

Your quality, my Lord, does not absolve you from the divine laws, nor give a sanction to perjury; but rather enforces the obligations of equity and truth. In real merit, the fair Sylviana is not your inferior; but, if she were, Heaven does not dispense with the rules of justice on the account of airy titles, and imaginary distinctions of birth.

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The highest satisfaction that you can make may, perhaps, never give her that tranquillity she enjoyed in her first humble circumstances. Could you restore her lost innocence, she would be more blessed in that than in all the grandeur to which you can raise her. You may alleviate her misfortune ; you cannot make full amends.

Nor can the loss of a tender parent be repaired. With a modest ingenuity the injured nymph confessed her crime to her pious mother ; who was so oppressed with the thought of such an infamy, that in a few weeks she expired, and left her beautiful daughter to weep out her solitary hours. Her distress demands your compassion ; and, by an act of justice to her, you will secure your future peace and happiness, and shew your gratitude to

MARIANA.

LETTER XX.

To Varius.

YOU have soon forgot my dying admonitions, and the promise you made me, to quit the guilty amour you are still pursuing. Can you, with deliberation, with reflection, proceed in a design which must, if you succeed, plunge the beautiful Cleora in guilt and infamy, whom you love ? What could hatred do more ?

But with what horror ought you to reflect on the injury you are doing to the generous Alphonfus your benefactor ! Is there nothing engaging in those titles ? or rather, are they not words of the most sacred importance ? Make it not the future interest of mankind to be your foes.

A man of your pretended honour could not bear the reproach of a lie ; and yet you are acting a lie ; practising the vilest treachery, and exposing a person of merit to ridicule. This, however unjust, must be the consequence of your success ; while he, secure in his own worth and integrity,

continues

continues to caress the wretch that injures him. How can you support the stings of his kindness to you?

To this injured, this generous man, you owe the height of your fortune. It was his interest alone that brought you into public trust and reputation. To requite him, you are violating all the laws of humanity, bringing infamy on his family, and secretly endeavouring to rival him in the affections of his charming wife, the object of all his virtuous joys; of which, from whom could he more properly exact the protection than from you?

Can you unmoved recal the distress into which a crime of this nature plunged my heedless youth? What remorse, what confusion a moment's madness cost me? You was the only confident to whom I discovered the secret wound it gave my bleeding soul.

But how fatal was that one fall of an extravagant passion to all my future repose! despair and horror filled my breast, when I considered the injury I had done was beyond reparation. Retirement was no more my sanctuary from the noisy croud; the image of my crime pursued me with inexpressible terrors; the innocent diversions of life were tasteless; music and wit had lost their charms; the proposals of pleasure were like jests to dying men, like recreations to the damned. Whatever decency appeared in my public behaviour, you were witness to the private intervals of my grief, and gave some relief to my anguish, by hearing my complaints with an obliging attention. But nature, after all its efforts, sunk; the pride of my youth yielded to the gloomy distemper. Yet the sincerity of my repentance found acceptance: and, as my last hour approached, some propitious spirit breathed peace and divine consolation to my soul, and in these gentle whispers reproved my infidelity.

Why should presumptuous man with feeble doubt,
And impotence of thought, mark out the bounds
Of clemency divine?—What tongue shall dare
Pronounce with impious vanity these words?

“ Thus far, nor farther, thy exulting waves,

“ O thou abyfs of sacred love ! shall roll :

“ Here thy triumphant billows shall retire,

“ Nor pass the bounds of human diffidence.”

But however serene the last scene of my life was, I would not, for all the joys the lower creation could give, endure the distraction and remorse that one error cost me. Are you softened at the complaints of my misery ? be terrified at the approaches of your own.

Thus warned, I hope you will retire. A thousand accidents have hitherto prevented your guilt, and crossed the madness of your love. Some pause of reason, some effort of virtue, may at last recover you from the paths of ruin. Comply with reason and virtue, with honour and friendship, with your own happiness, and that of others, with the interest of the *living*, and the desires of the *dead*.

THEODOSIUS.

G

T H O U G H T S

O N

D E A T H.

Translated from the MORAL ESSAYS of Mess.
DE PORT-ROYAL.

BEYOND the address which men have never to think of death but as at a very great distance, nor to view it but in some other person, without putting themselves one moment in the place of the *dying*; they have yet a farther art to delude themselves, by forming such a general and confused idea as conceals from them all that is most terrible in death. They conceive little else of this state but as a privation of sense, and a separation from the commerce of life; so that when they say a man is dead, they only mean, that they see him no more, and that he shares no longer in the affairs of the world. In a word, their idea of death is only formed on what men cease to do in dying, and not on what they begin to do and feel, though it be that which constitutes its most dreadful circumstance.

Death is indeed a privation of life and human action; but it is a privation which is felt, and produces surprising effects in the soul. In order to comprehend these effects, it is necessary to consider, that while the soul is united to the body, its attention is divided by divers kinds of sensations, imaginations, and passions. It feels the objects which act on the body, according to their different manner of influence; and these different ways of perceiving are called *sensations*. On these
the

the soul forms its ideas of all things to which it is united by its passions, and is always employed about these objects; and not only employed, but leans and reposes on them when it is not entirely united to God. For, not being made with a capacity to sustain itself, the soul necessarily seeks some foreign support. It was formed to know and love; but, finding nothing within sufficient to satisfy these inclinations, it is forced with some other objects to fill the void it finds in itself. Some of these objects make agreeable impressions on the sense; others content our curiosity and vanity; others relieve the mind by turning it from things which appear disgusting; some nourish its hopes, while others fortify it against its fears. The soul inclines to all the objects of sense, and is engaged and supported by them, in such a manner, that it cannot prove a separation without pain and emotion.

We are not always sensible of these ties; but the soul begins to feel them when it comes to be separated from what it loves. It has then a sense of the privation, proportionable to its union with them. So true is that maxim of St Augustine, "It is impossible to lose any thing without sorrow but what we possess without passion."

There are few persons free from an infinite number of these engagements; and though we are ignorant of them, till an actual separation discovers what they are, we may nevertheless conceive something, by separating ourselves from them in our thoughts, and imagining we are deprived of them by some accident.

For instance, take a person who does not seem to place his happiness in the objects of sight, and fancies they contribute nothing to the tranquillity of his mind; and suppose him suddenly deprived of his sight; though in all other circumstances happy, we should find him affected with the loss as the greatest misfortune. The sight of mankind gives us some consolation, because we always dis-

cover in them a certain appearance of compassion, capable to give us succour in our necessities ; which at least indulges our hopes, and those hopes excite a kind of secret joy.

The objects which, in some respects, are disgusting to the soul, and raise its fears and aversion, yet in other views fail not to sustain it. For though these uneasy passions cannot be altogether appeased, yet the imagination always furnishes them with means or hopes that quiet them ; while the pursuit of those means, or the hopes of arriving at the end of their desires, employ and divert the mind.

All the objects to which the soul is joined, by the senses, imagination, reason, or passions, are its goods and riches ; and even those we call poor, abound in these sort of goods. If they want palaces, or even a cottage, they have the sky, the sun, and stars ; of which the prospect is so magnificent, that St Augustine says, “ It is a greater blessing for the poor to behold the heavenly luminaries, than for the rich to view their golden roofs.”

Thus, in the privation of some advantages, we comfort ourselves with others, true or false, that we either possess or hope for. As the body always finds something to bear it, since even when through weariness it falls to the ground, it there finds a support ; so the soul, sick and feeble, never fails of something to sustain it ; and when there is nothing real, forms imaginary supports on which (vain as they are) it leans.

This necessity of human consolations is not peculiar to vicious men. In some degree, the virtuous want their relief. There are few persons so perfect, but they have still some remaining tie to the world. Fatigued by a long attention to spiritual objects, they are forced, in divers instances, to abandon themselves, and fly for satisfaction to their friends, their children, their estates ; to a field of their own planting, or an edifice of their own raising.

This

This is the condition of man in this life ; which may help us to comprehend what death is, with the effects it produces. We ought to look on it as the rupture of all that unites us to the creatures ; a general separation from the objects of sense ; the cancelling all human ties, and every pleasure the soul found in them ; with a total privation of what it loved and enjoyed on earth. When a man dies, he loses not only what he called his wealth, but the firmament, the sun, the stars, the air, the earth, and all the rest of nature : he loses his body, and all those sensations that gave him pleasure ; he loses his relations, his friends, and all mankind ; he loses all relief, all support ; and, in short, all the objects of his senses and passions.

Indeed if the soul, in some degree united to these, finds itself also united to God by a holy love, though the privation of the creatures causes some emotion, yet it sinks not into despair. For this divine principle sustains it ; and growing more active, confirms its hopes of being shortly united to, and overwhelmed in that abyss of pleasure, which alone can satisfy all its capacity of loving.

But who is able to conceive the state of the miserable soul, when it comes by death to be rent from all the objects of its inclinations ; from all that sustained it during life, and finds nothing in itself on which to lean ? Its propensities to love, and enjoy what it loved, become, beyond comparison, more lively and ardent, while all the soul was fond of escapes, and flies before her with an everlasting flight, without leaving the least hope of fruition. She loses all, finds nothing ; all sinks under her, all vanishes and disappears for ever.

It is not possible, in this world, to comprehend a state so perfectly miserable. All one can say, to give some idea of it, is this. It is a terrible fall of the soul, by a sudden removal of all its supports ; it is an horrible famine, by a privation of its nourishment ; it is an infinite void, by the annihilation of all that filled it ; it is an extreme poverty,

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verty, by the entire loss of that which was its wealth; it is a ghastly solitude, by the separation it finds itself in from all union and society; it is a dreadful desolation, by the want of all consolation; it is a cruel rupture, which violently rends the soul from every object of its love.

LETTERS



L E T T E R S

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

P A R T I.

L E T T E R I.

*From Philario to his friend, relating his unhappy amour
with Amasia.*

My dear Chamont,

WHATEVER reproaches my past follies have deserved, I know my present misfortunes will raise your compassion.—

The gentle Amasia is no more ; she expired in my arms, and I have paid the last rites to her memory.

Your suspicions were just, that I had perverted and secretly kept her, contrary to all the friendly admonitions you gave me. The spring of my misery was my father's marrying me, at twelve years old, (O cursed avarice !) to a girl of ten, only to secure her vast fortune to his family. As I grew old, instead of liking I conceived an unconquerable aversion to the innocent creature : but no arguments could prevail with my father to break the contract, and I was as obstinate never to complete the marriage. Thus intangled, I grew uneasy ; which my sister observing, to divert my chagrin, often carried me with her to visit a young lady, descended from a good family, but decayed in fortune, and obscure. Having never met her before in any public place, I was surprised at the sight

fight of such an accomplished beauty ; which her fine genius, and a thousand elegancies in her conversation, still heightened. Here the guilty inclination began, which, never presaging its fatal event, I cherished, and resolved to be happy in spite of the incumbrance of my young wife ; who, without any matrimonial cares at heart, devoted herself with her babies and play-things ; while I, privileged by my sister's discretion and intimacy, continued my visits to Amasia ; whom we always found with her mother, the pious and discreet Sophronia ; whose only fault was being a little too reserved and severe in her temper. But Amasia had a natural disposition to books and solitude, with a temper rather serious and pensive than gay ; which made the strictness of her mother's conduct, and her own confinement easy. The little society she had, was with some grave and good women of Sophronia's acquaintance, who took care to inform her, that all the men of the present age were rakes and Atheists ; and the young women no better, nor hardly so good as they should be ; and that conversing with such sage persons as themselves, was the most reputable thing she could do. Amasia assented to their wise maxims ; my sister and I being the only acquaintance of a modern character that were admitted to the house. I made myself so agreeable to Sophronia, that I got the office of reader to the family ; but, to my secret mortification, instead of plays, she confined me to history or sermons, though my accent was better suited to the stage than the pulpit. However, my fair audience were pleased and attentive ; and I would rather have taken orders than have lost my employment. But it was not long before cautious Sophronia saw through the disguise of my zeal ; and, observing a greater gaiety than was usual to Amasia's temper, in conversing with me, she told my sister freely her suspicions ; entreating her, as she valued her daughter's reputation, to bring me no more with her. My sister, who was perfectly virtuous, was
alarmed

alarmed at the discovery ; and would never, from that time, suffer me to accompany her.

I had now no way to let Amasia know the violence of my passion but by a letter ; which unluckily fell into her mother's hands. By this, confirmed in her fears, she charged Amasia, as she expected her blessing, to send back any future billet from me unopened. This severe injunction she punctually obeyed till her mother's death, which happened in the midst of this adventure. She was suddenly seized ; and finding her sickness mortal, she took the weeping fair by the hand, demanding, as the last proof of her duty, that she would, in the presence of the all-seeing Deity, promise never to converse with me, or receive my addresses.

This Amasia could not deny a dying tender parent. But, oh ! how fatal to herself and me was this engagement ! how wild was my grief when my sister informed me of the cruel obligation ! However, I waited till the formalities of sorrow due to her mother's memory were past ; when, with the impatience of love, I hastened to her house, and, bribing her servant, got admittance, without Amasia's knowledge, to her chamber.

Never did her charms appear to such advantage. The soft surprise, the modest confusion, the struggle between a tender inclination, and the restraint of conscious honour, gave her a thousand nameless graces. Whether the yielding beauty, with a gentle languishment, betrayed the passion she had long disguised ; or whether recovering herself with all the pomp of virtue, she reproached my attempt, still she put on resolute charms : but, in every transporting variety of her temper, I saw my own advantage ; nor left the conquest unfinished. With deep repentance I now confess, it gave me an impious pleasure, to find love triumphant over all the pride of virtue. But Heaven soon avenged its cause, and humbled me in the height of my successful insolence.

I had not long continued my visits to Amasia but an affair of consequence required my absence

for some weeks. In the mean time she was seized with a fever. As she found the symptoms mortal, she wrote, and immediately sent me this letter.

My dear Philario,

“ **W**Here are those ages of love, that heaven
 “ and eternal series of tranquillity and joy,
 “ with which you profanely flattered me? The
 “ bright delusion, the visionary paradise, is already
 “ lost; my sun is setting at noon; an untimely
 “ evening draws its shadows over all my promised
 “ joys.

“ That immortal bloom, those heavenly charms,
 “ that you told me might bid defiance to sickness
 “ and age, are already blasted by a cruel disease.
 “ A sudden autumn has withered my prime; the
 “ lilies droop, the roses die, chilling winter has
 “ faded my youthful spring.—But a few days
 “ more, and I am dust.

“ This truth sits heavy on my soul, and brings
 “ my guilt, with its full aggravation, in view.
 “ My mother’s dying admonitions, my broken
 “ vows, terrify me to distraction. My crime was
 “ not the effect of ignorance or inadvertency. Pitying
 “ angels set the penalties of eternal damnation,
 “ and the recompence of an immortal crown, in prospect
 “ before me; the caverns of death disclosed their
 “ terrors, and the realms of celestial light opened
 “ their glories to my active imagination. I was forewarned,
 “ by the advice of a dying parent, of the infamy and ruin to
 “ which this soft temptation has betrayed me. I
 “ had experienced the satisfactions of reason and
 “ virtue. But for you I ventured on present and
 “ future perdition, and gave up my title to
 “ all the joys of immortality. And now, ye regions
 “ of divine light, you have no attractions for a
 “ mind so impure; I would only fly to you as a
 “ retreat from infernal misery.

“ And yet, too charming youth! you engage my
 “ affections. I would live; but (O fatal madness!)
 “ I would live for you. By you I was seduced;
 “ but,

" but, oh ! may your soul stand clear of my ruin !

" It is myself, not you, I would accuse.

" Last night, (if waking or in a dream I am uncertain), my mother's venerable shade, majestic in heavenly splendor, appeared to me, and bid me *prepare for the silent tomb !* ——— What preparation can I make ? What penitence can atone for repeated perjury ? for crimes against the clearest convictions of heavenly light, and the sanction of voluntary vows ?

" What figures of speech could you make use of to take off from vices like these their deformity ? what eloquence did you employ thus to pervert my judgment ? By what infernal enchantment was I led on to mine own destruction ? ——— You have undone me ; but am I hopeless ! Can you make no reparation ? Cannot you reverse the injury, and talk as well in the cause of heaven as you did in the interest of hell ? ——— Oh ! make the compassionate trial ! ——— Can you pray ? ——— Can you implore mercy for me ? Persuasion dwell upon your tongue ! Could you be sincere, Heaven perhaps may hear. ——— My strength is spent ! ——— I faint ! ——— Fly to my assistance, that at least I may take a last farewell.

AMASIA."

This letter surprised and distracted me. I knew not what I did or said ; but I ordered my horses, and returned with all the speed that love could give me, to the idol of my soul ; whom I found by intervals in her perfect senses, but in the agonies of death.

The melancholy scene will never quit my memory. Death came, attended by his real and fantastic horrors ; he made his approach with every circumstance terrible to nature or reason. Never was the passage to his waste dominions more gloomy ; never did a departing spirit quit the light of heaven with more reluctance !

" Oh ! (she cried, grasping my hand), whither

“ am I going ? to what unknown regions ? On
 “ what desolate coasts am I doomed eternally to
 “ wander ? How dark the entrance ; how long the
 “ passage that opens before me !——See yonder
 “ sullen ghost beckons me away !——another pale
 “ spectre summons me to the grave, and bids me
 “ mingle with the dead.—How my senses wan-
 “ der !——O for a month’s, a week’s, an hour’s
 “ reprieve !” Then, fixing her eager eyes on
 mine, she asked, “ Cannot you procure this for
 “ me, after all your boasted love ?——I am cited
 “ to the supreme tribunal :——have you the har-
 “ diness to appear for me ?——The whole creation
 “ cannot aid me in this extremity !” After which
 she lay long speechless and convulsed ; and, cast-
 ing a dismal glance at me, with a heavy groan,
 expired.

I could not refuse this sad recital to your re-
 quest, and my avowed confidence in you. It is
 some kind of relief to pour my grief into your bo-
 som, and to excite in yours a generous compassion
 which I know you feel for

The wretched PHILARIO.

L E T T E R II.

*From Cassander to a gentleman at Venice, relating the
 murder of his friend.*

My dear friend,

OH ! why do I profane that sacred title ! If you
 knew me, you would start, as if the fiends
 below had given you that appellation.—But I
 must unmask myself, whatever horror the mon-
 strous appearance gives you. Perhaps some sparks
 of pity may mingle with your aversion, when you
 find my misery bears some proportion to my guilt.

Oh ! think what it is !——Imagine the dreadful
 scene I would unveil !——Recall the most tragical
 action that was ever represented on the stage ; or
 the most bloody effect of fury that has been really
 perpetrated in human life.

Why

Why do not the tears that fall from my eyes, stain the paper with a sanguine hue? Why does not blood instead of ink, flow from my pen in dismal characters, to mark my crime? Why should I express myself in the language of men, and not invoke the infernal furies to teach me their dialect, that I may give my guilt its proper aggravation? for mine is a deed of darkness, fit for the records of hell! —murder! —execrable murder! —This cursed hand, that trembles every nerve to relate it, gave the deadly wound! —Horror! —confusion! —Scarce can I refrain, by the wildest imprecations, to hasten that vengeance at which I tremble. — It will fall too soon, and with some terrible distinction; for mine was a sin of a superior note, marked with uncommon malignity.

In vain am I acquitted at a human tribunal, by the partiality of justice, and the solicitations of powerful friends, while, by my own conscience, and the divine laws, I am evidently condemned. What plea shall I find against the reproaches of my own reason, that restless monitor within? To what shelter shall I fly from unerring justice? — Hide me ye rocks! cover me, ye mountains, from the pursuit of eternal vengeance!

My sin was an outrage against nature, a defiance of all the laws of friendship and humanity. — You dare not believe me, when I tell you it was my friend! — Oh distracting thought! — my friend! — the young, the gentle Antonio, that I murdered! — I see him fall! — I see him bleed! — The soul sits quivering on his lips, his eye-balls roll in death! — I behold the gaping wound, the last convulsive pangs, the pale and senseless corpse extended on the ground! The dreadful scene is for ever new, and rises before me with insulting horror. The visionary terrors haunt my solitary retreats, and damp the joy of society. My days are unacquainted with peace, my nights with rest; the whole creation is an undistinguished chaos; the skies have lost their light, the fields
their

their verdure ; every charm is blotted from the face of nature ; the sweetest odours no more refresh me ; harmony, with its soothing tones, no more delights me ; I sicken at the most luxurious banquets ; the richest wines have lost their flavour ; beauty no more invites, nor pleasure with her softest eloquence allures me.

Those fair gardens, where art and nature combine to rival all that has been fabled of the vale of Tempe, or the Cyprian groves, these soft retreats, which were late my pride and delight, now yield a gloomy prospect, and look like the seats of desolation and despair : for here the bloody fact was done ; here I violated Nature's great original law, defied eternal justice, and sealed my own perdition.

You know with what frenzy I doted on the artful Marcella. She was the idol of my thoughts : with her I spent my gay licentious hours, regardless of my honour, my country, or my friends ; for her I contrived gardens of pleasure, opened crystal fountains, raised bowers perfumed with every fragrant blossom, to entertain her : nor once believed she could be capable of ingratitude, till that fatal night when I surprised her with the unhappy Antonio.

I returned more early than usual from an appointed debauch ; and not finding Marcella in her apartment, I ran immediately into a private garden, where she sometimes took an evening walk. The moon shone clear ; and at the entrance of an arbour, I saw her sitting with Antonio, loosely reclining his head in her lap. He rose and came forward smiling ; whether with an air of insult or raillery, I did not stay to consider ; but flushed with wine, and enraged with jealousy, I drew my sword, and stabbed him through the heart ; while Marcella in a swoon lay cold and senseless at my feet.

My rage was spent in a moment, my amorous flame extinguished, and friendship, with all its force returned triumphant on my soul. I threw myself

myself on the ground by the dying youth, supported and embraced him, melted into tears, and called aloud on his pity to forgive me. My servants were alarmed; and rushing into the garden, beheld the bloody scene.

By this time Marcella was recovered from her swoon, and reproached my rashness; assuring me she had employed all her art to persuade him to comply with that fatal assignation. She frankly owned he had been long the object of her fondest desires, but that till then he had refused any secret appointment with her, from a sense of friendship to me, and justice to his young and beautiful wife, whom he sincerely loved.

This discovery distracted me. I cursed myself and her, and charged her to fly my sight for ever, lest I should double my guilt, and inure myself to murder. I was so far from endeavouring to escape the rigour of the law, that I challenged it, called aloud for the ministers of justice, witnessed against my own life, and avowed the barbarous fact. But however I was cleared by a human verdict, I stand condemned by a higher and more righteous decision. My conscience tells me,

—The door is shut;
The Judge has pass'd my everlasting doom,
Which all created power can ne'er reverse.
My day's for ever gone, my sun is set
In final darkness, ne'er to rise again;
My summer's spent, eternal winter's come;
The season's past. —

On me no ray of mercy e'er will shine,
No smiling beam of hope will ever rise;
Justice divine, and self-condemning guilt,
Consign me over to eternal wo."

What repentance is there for a wretch who can make no restitution? The injury I have done can never be cancelled. It was desperate, it was irreparable mischief, that I brought on the wretched Antonio. I cut off his space of trial, his probation for immortal joys, and tore him from all his
future

future hopes of salvation. I perhaps surprised him with all his sins and unrepented follies on his head ; his guilt might that instant be in its fullest magnitude, while I, with a more than infernal rage, seized the cursed moment, and sent an immortal spirit to hell. He may now be loading me with execrations ; and sounding revenge through the caverns of darkness, against a miscreant that barred the gates of bliss, and opened his passage to the dungeons of misery and endless despair.

These are the horrible images that haunt, and sometimes drive me to the precipice of ruin. Last night, in a dead and silent hour, I took my sword, and went softly into my garden, resolving to stab myself (so wild are the intervals of my grief) on the same place, where I murdered my friend. When I came near, I saw, or my fancy only made it real, a ghastly phantom resembling the murdered Antonio, standing on the very spot where I gave the fatal thrust ; his countenance wan and doleful, his motionless eyes fixed full on mine, while his hand pointed to the well-imitated wound on his breast.

The sight withered my strength, and the sword dropped from my trembling hand ; guilt made me a coward, and with a childish fear I hastily retired to my chamber, calling one of my servants to attend me. So unlike am I grown to myself, I start at a shadow, and shudder at the presage of a dream ; am surrounded with ill omens, and tormented with more direful forebodings within.

We talk of racks, of hissing snakes, and of gnawing worms ; but all the emphasis of human language cannot describe the tortures of an accusing conscience. The united force of art and nature cannot yield the least relief. The light of paradise could not cheer me ; the songs of angels would but heighten my remorse, and augment the exquisite anguish : the gloom of impenetrable night, and the sound of eternal tempests, would sooner soothe these unutterable agonies.

What privilege is my being ? Why am I cursed
with

with immortality ? Oh that my severe Judge, my omnipotent adversary, would speak me again into my primitive *nothing*, and with one potent word finish my existence !

“ The beasts are happy ; they come forth, and keep
 “ Short watch on earth, and then lie down to sleep.
 “ Pain is for man ; and, oh ! how vast a pain
 “ For crimes that made the Godhead bleed in vain !”

Dr Young.

But why do I think it in vain for me ? Am I of all human race exempted ? Am I the only distinguished sinner excluded from the benefit of that infinite atonement ? Am I on earth, or shut up in the infernal prison ? Oh stay, thou glimmering beam of hope, with one heavenly visit cheer my benighted soul. An uncertain *if*, a flattering possibility, would be a momentary heaven to me ; it would be redemption from hell, pardon to a reprobate spirit. And yet,

If I must perish, prostrate at thy feet
 The humble victim of thy wrath shall fall,
 Imploring mercy still ; for mercy reigns
 Triumphant in thy nature : 'tis thy boast,
 The attribute that reigns on this side hell.

My dear Clerimont, excuse my freedom. It is natural for misery to complain. Had I been acquainted with a person of more piety and generous compassion than yourself, I had spared you the reading of this melancholy relation, to which your long stay at Venice has made you a stranger.

Adieu, I know you will pity

The wretched CASSANDER.

L E T T E R III.

To Belinda from Sylvia, to inform her of the reasons of her sudden retreat into the country.

MY dear Belinda, I am indeed got back again,

I

“ To

“ To harmless plain work, and to croaking rooks,
“ Old fashion'd halls, dull aunts, and godly books.

Mr Pope.

to a view of Nature in that simplicity which you rally so agreeably. But it is here I have recovered my peace, and am again grown a reasonable creature; to which those godly books that you seem to have such a notion of, have very much contributed; particularly Bishop Tillotson.

I see you smile, not in malice, but good nature, at the sober confession, and want of delicacy in the choice of my reading. It diverts you, I know, that I should let Dryden and Otway lie stupidly by me, and impertinently spend an hour in reading a sermon; that when I am so well at ease in this world, it should ever enter into my head to think of another; and that, in the bloom of eighteen, I should have such a gloomy disposition, as to think myself mortal. And, if you will forgive me, I will own, that I sometimes read the Bible, in contempt of all modern refinements, and hope to form my life on that antiquated scheme. These are, I confess, my dear Belinda, a very unfashionable set of thoughts, and have nothing in them modish or polite.

I believe you will be very inquisitive to find what has put these odd, these strange unaccountable whimsies into my brain.

It is love! (you start—you pity—you pray for me); but it is love, a tender hopeless passion, that has had this surprising effect! It is an absolute despair of being happy in this world, that has put me on endeavours to secure the happiness of the next. Could I have possessed the idol of my soul, I had been at rest, and had lost the relish of superior joys.

But mine, with confusion I own it, was a criminal affection, forbid by earth and heaven. My bliss was prohibited by laws human and divine. This confession will surprise you; but could you know the severity of my conduct, you would excuse

cuse me. I have torn myself from the sight of the lovely youth for ever, though I could have lost the light of the sun with less reluctance. My hasty retreat into the country was free and voluntary; and not, as was thought, the effect of my father's command. I was sincere, Heaven is my witness, in my desire to free myself from the criminal passion; and I thought the most certain way to conquest, was by flight.

You know the tour my brother made to Paris brought him acquainted with Monsieur le Comte de R——; and when he came into England, my brother returned with his family. I was in town, and waited on Madame la Comtesse, who did me the honour to detain me some time with her.

Monsieur le Comte was one of the handsomest and best bred men in the world, and had as much of the English gravity as was agreeable to my own temper; which made me find his conversation very grateful and entertaining; nor had I the least suspicion that there was any hazard in such a harmless satisfaction. I had conversed in town with as much freedom as a virtuous education allowed; and kept an equal indifference, without the least inclination to love, or even pretending to hate any mortal man.

The Comte was perfectly well bred; and my vanity made me interpret every little turn of gallantry, as the mark of some peculiar value and innocent friendship he had for me. Any other thought would have shocked my delicacy, and put me on my guard, against the guilty passion I found kindling in my own breast; which, instead of opposing I indulged, as gratitude, and a just sense of merit.

But I was soon sensible of the delusion, and how easily vice betrays an unguarded mind, under the specious disguise of virtue. I found this freedom of conversation would prove fatal to all the peace and innocence of my mind, which had now lost its native calmness; and I began to experience all the fantastic effects of spleen, vapours, caprice; in

short, an uneasiness with myself, and every thing else in the world, the charming Comtesse herself not excepted.

But this set my guilt before me in its full aggravation. Envy and deceit had till now been strangers to my breast; which made me start at the monstrous forms. Every new favour from Madame la Comtesse reproached me with violating the trust and confidence she had in my truth and virtue, and for having a wish that she had been less beautiful and deserving. The affection and intimacy with which she treated me, gave me an horror for myself: and I was again generous and sincere, and, as I thought, perfectly confirmed in virtue: till the charming Comte appeared; when I found myself jealous, unjust, and perverted to vice in a moment.

However, I disguised my folly, from a secret delicacy in point of reputation, and an unaffected sense of honour. I am ashamed to tell you I had a thought that needed a disguise, though it was involuntary and unallowed. But I was an ill dissembler; and have some reason to believe the real disposition of my heart was perceived by the Comte; who, one evening, surprised me reclined on the side of a fountain, repeating these lines.

Come, blest'd religion, with thy angel's face,
Dispel this gloom, and brighten all the place!
Drive this destructive passion from my breast,
Compose my sorrows, and restore my rest!
Shew me the path the sainted virgins trod,
Wean me from earth, and raise my soul to God!
No more let guilty love my heart inflame!

The Comte understood English perfectly well: but I recovered myself with as good a grace as I could, and put on more gaiety and assurance than was indeed natural to my disposition; and, to conceal my disorder, left him with precipitancy, and returned to the Comtesse; who was in her apartment, reading the story of Rhetea in the life of Cyrus. She asked me, *How I liked it?* The question,

question, I am persuaded, was accidental; but, with some confusion, I answered, *That I thought it well told.* However, it awakened my remorse, and gave me an exquisite sense of the injustice of my secret inclinations.

From this moment I resolved to go back into the country, to conceal and conquer my folly. The tenderness and unaffected concern the Comtesse expressed in parting with me, confirmed my virtue, and gave me a secret confusion for the injustice of having wished her less happy. The calmness and serenity of my soul seemed to be restored; and I had left the place a conqueror, if the Comte had not led me to the coach, and by an accidental sigh, and a sort of a serious air in his face, given my mind a softer turn, and convinced me of the vanity of human confidence, and that I had triumphed without a victory.

But the retirement of the country, and serious reflection, soon freed me from the tumultuous effects of a guilty passion. The scene altered with infinite advantage, and all grew peaceful and serene. I am now reconciled to myself, and find an ineffable satisfaction in the silent approbation of my own conduct; a satisfaction superior to all the empty applause of the crowd. I reflect with pleasure on the happy change. My soul seems now in its proper situation; and, conscious of its dignity, looks above this world for its rest and happiness. I am almost in a state of insensibility with regard to mortal things; and have fixed my views on those infinite delights which will be the certain rewards of virtue.

What is there here to fill these vast desires?
Should Fancy all her dazzling scenes display,
Our wishes unconfin'd, would wander still
Beyond the limits of these narrow skies,
In search of boundless and immortal joys.

Adieu, my dear Belinda. As long as I leave you to the quiet possession of the dear town, and its dear joys, you will not envy me all that a gay imagination

imagination can form of future pleasures.—I have trusted you with the inmost secrets of my soul, and know I can depend upon your fidelity. I am

Your unalterable friend,
SYLVIA.

[See the sequel of this story in Letter 5. Part II.]

L E T T E R IV.

To Eusebius, from a Deist.

WHERE shall I find rest! The wide creation denies it. I have run through all the varieties of human folly, and searched every vanity below the sun: I have tried what was to be found in madness; women, wine, and frolic have divided my hours; and I am now trying what satisfaction wisdom and philosophy can yield. You have made me at last a convert to natural religion, and turned me into a sort of a virtuous Heathen. Morality in its practice is no longer my aversion. I begin to think reason and immortality the highest advantages of humanity. That there is a God, all nature cries aloud through all her works; and while I am attending those sacred dictates, in such raptures as these, I often address myself.

To the unknown G O D.

WHATE'er thou art, thou Excellence unknown!
'Tis thee thro' all thy various works we seek.
These secret languishments, these fierce desires,
Howe'er licentious, free and unconfin'd,
Pursue unseen an object infinite.
Through ev'ry fair disguise the leading G O D
Allures our eager souls. That rosy blush,
Those sparkling eyes, and soft enchanting smiles,
Receiv'd their charms from thee, beauty is thine
In all its conqu'ring powers. In thee
We trace up pleasure to its sacred source.

We

We meet thee in the balmy western breeze,
The fragrance of the spring, the spicy isles;
And all Arabia breathes its sweets from thee.

*From harmony to harmony we rise,
To that superior skill which tun'd the spheres,
Gave melody to Gabriel's heavenly lyre,
And every moving grace to Rolli's song.*

Whatever sacred force in music lies,
The dying strain that calms the wildest care,
Or loftier note that prompts to glorious deeds:
Th' inspiring GOD dwells in the mystic sound,
And charms and captivates the list'ning soul,
Through all her soft capacities of joy. *✕*

But what art thou, the secret spring of life,
Supreme in all perfections, though unknown?
More lovely than the fairest of thy works;
For thou art still beyond similitude:
Still rising with distinguish'd eminence,
In perfect beauty, and unrival'd glory.

But what those beauties, what those glories are,
No mortal eye has seen, nor boldest flight
Of fancy in her gayest scenes conceiv'd.

Some soft celestial echoes from afar,
Some glimm'ring rays with a reflected light,
Attract our souls, and kindle warm desires,
Impetuous wishes and aspiring hopes,
Which own no bounds, but infinitely free,
Break through created limits with contempt,
And seek the great Original of bliss.

But, oh! if Love—if Love's the boasted name,
And darling attribute, reveal thyself,
Unfold the heavenly wonders of thy face,
And stand in open majesty confess'd!

Why was I form'd with these aspiring thoughts,
And elegant desires, these boundless aims,
That reach at nothing short of GOD himself?
If 'tis a bliss impossible to man;

If thou wilt never fill these vast desires,
Why were they rais'd? This eminence of thought
Is but my torment!—Oh! recal again
This glorious curse, this thankless gift, my reason!
This immortality, my dread, my horror!

Far rather had I flourish'd in a plant,
 And only reach'd a vegetable life,
 Open'd my blossoms to the rising sun,
 And dropp'd their beauties e'er the evening close;
 Or had I mounted with the feather'd race
 In heights of air, or with my fellow-brutes
 At freedom rang'd the trackless desert o'er;
 Slept in a den, or stretch'd my careless bulk
 Secure in open fields, heedless of good
 Or evil past, or present, or to come!

Oh, envy'd lot to mine! if I must live
 Eternal years excluded from thy face
 Be it in earth, or air, or in the deep,
 Where thou art absent, every place is hell!

The fields and woods are often witnesses to these soliloquies, while I fly from man, to converse with the great Spirit of nature; for you have at last convinced me of a divine presence, with whose immensity I am surrounded. To this conscious Mind I sometimes address myself. With pleasure I grow acquainted with this propitious Being, and adore him as the spring of my existence. I seem to find some new capacities of happiness awake in my soul. I languish for some unknown joys, some yet unexperienced pleasures; and grow confident that the power who raised these desires, will at last gratify them.

That silence, that self-reflection and retirement, that was lately my horror, is now become my delight; while I am attending the dictates of reason, and sincerely endeavouring to know the will of that divine Mind, who must be too beneficent to leave me in my present doubts, while I am sincerely seeking the heavenly illumination.

Thus far, my dear Eusebius, your arguments have had success. I have the highest obligations to you, for not suffering me to degrade myself into the rank of animals, and for persuading me to assume the dignity of a reasonable creature. In that capacity, I am

Your most obliged humble servant,

PHILANDER.

LETTER V.

To Mrs ———, from Amoret, giving an account of
her criminal passion for Sebastian.

Madam,

HOW shall I begin? What language can paint the confusion of my thoughts? which could you be sensible of, it would be some apology for the fatal secret I would discover. I am yet but a modest sinner; and can neither excuse, nor dare disguise my guilt from one, who till now has shared all the secrets of my soul.

Oh, think what I would say! Imagine what it is I find such reluctance to discover, and which I must discover, though it cost me all your esteem! your esteem, which has been my pride and happiness. But even that I will resign, rather than suffer you to injure your own character, by a continuance of that friendship I have forfeited.

I am not that modest innocent person you believe me. There is no disguising my infamy, nor recovering my lost honour.

I know you are surpris'd; you hardly credit me: you would fain believe I have belied myself; and what I have told you is the effect of spleen, melancholy, any thing but truth. Would to Heaven that it was all frenzy, and wild imagination! that I were innocently unhappy! that I had lost my reason, and kept my virtue!

Oh, heavenly virtue! thine's a sacred flame,
And still my soul pays homage to thy name.

Ye chaste and holy thoughts that once possessed my soul, return again! Return, ye smiling scenes of innocence and peace! Ye secret consolations of religion! ye gentle whispers of conscience! speak peace again to my unquiet breast!

I have not yet begun my fatal story.—Oh, let it never be told! let it be lost in eternal oblivion!

K

—But

—But that is impossible ; it is registered on my heart.

In what dark cavern shall I hide my head ?
Where seek retreat,—now innocence is fled ?

If my penitence had obtained pardon from Heaven, the public would speak my infamy aloud. How am I fallen ! from what height of reputation to the lowest contempt ! This, to a mind that still retains the nicest sense of honour, is an affliction insupportable. I have no refuge from the insults of the world but solitude ; and thither the thoughts of my guilt and infamy pursue me. The country-shades, the seats of tranquillity and peace, afford me no relief.

Alone through unfrequented shades I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove.
But at my sight each verdant prospect wears
A gloomy view ; and every plant appears
To bend its top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears. }
What joy can I in these recesses find ?
What beauteous scenes can please a guilty mind ?
In vain the sun his morning-pride displays ;
I turn my eyes, and sicken at his rays.
The silver moon, and sparkling stars by night,
Torment me too with their officious light.

Heaven and earth seem to reproach me, and join with the convictions of my own reason, which fully approves the rules I have violated. To what has my folly reduced me ? Where shall I seek for peace, when I am at variance with myself, and my practice is inconsistent with those heavenly precepts to which my mind assents ?

I would tell you the story of my ruin, but every circumstance fills me with confusion. You know my seducer, and what a train of artifices he has employed to complete it. You, Madam, gave me many gentle admonitions : but I was too secure in my own resolution, and that disguise of honour, which the false Sebastian always avowed,
and

and never with more assurance, than when his flattery betrayed me into this infamy.

Time and place, the evening gloom, and verdant shade, every circumstance conspired to my undoing. The whispering gales, the falling fountains, the green retreats, and flowery scenes, heightened the soft temptation. All nature seemed to soothe the tender passion, and gave my charming seducer new advantages. His form, his aspect, acquired unusual graces, and his language was all enchantment.

—————“ And oh ! his charming tongue
 “ Was but too well acquainted with my weakness.
 “ He talk’d of love, and all my melting heart
 “ Dissolv’d within my breast.”——

Otway.

Whither is my imagination wandering ? Ye powers of chastity assist me ! blot this guilty scene for ever from my soul ! Let the remembrance of these criminal delights no more return ! let them be lost in darkness and oblivion ! Let me be entertained with more pure and lasting joys, in some humble retreat, far from the noise and thoughtless amusements of the world ! I ask not princely bowers, or artful walks ; let me pass my hours in some unfrequented shade, where the images of vanity and sin may never enter ! Oh, celestial life ! how do these peaceful scenes soothe and flatter my soul ! through what enchanting paths does my imagination stray ! Ye vain grandeurs of the world, adieu. Adieu, ye idle amusements, and fantastic pleasures. What shadows do you now appear ! how unsubstantial to these serious prospects of bliss ! Let me dwell unmolested here ! Let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting follies ! Here let me attend the happy period, that shall untie the band of life ; and then,

Let some fair spirit, form’d alone for love,
 That’s happy in its full enjoyment,

K 2

Tune

Tune the celestial lute, and gently sing
A *requiem* to my soul, call out my life
By the sweet powers of heav'nly harmony;
While on a rosy couch I rest my head,
And in the languishments of love divine
Resign my breath, and wake in endless joy.

In the height of distraction, I subscribe,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

From Evander to a Libertine.

YOU must excuse me, my Lord, if I should not yield to the conviction of your raillery, nor damn myself in mere good manners and ceremony. I must confess, never was a bad cause defended with more wit and vivacity; but I dare not venture on eternal misery, in the gaiety of my heart, nor give up my hopes of salvation for a jest.

Nor can you blame me, my Lord, for being serious in things, which, to my apprehension, are the greatest realities; though, to your politer imagination, they may appear but dreams and chimeras. Till I can change my opinion, I should act unreasonably, to desist from my pursuit of what I think the noblest end of human actions.

As for your objection against my scheme, that it is a happiness future and uncertain; yours, my Lord, has the same disadvantage,

Is there any mortal that thinks himself happy in any present enjoyment? Some uneasy circumstance or other mingles itself with all sublunary bliss. It is some future expectation that engages the mind. To-morrow's assignation with a jovial friend or mistress, depends on so precarious a thing as life; which thousands, before another rising sun, must resign; and yours, perhaps, may be among the destined number; and in that very
moment

moment your expectations perish, and prove as visionary as the celestial pleasures and divine entertainments that you turn into ridicule.

On your scheme, it is but a breath betwixt a man, a reasonable being, the lord of the creation; and a clod of earth, a shadow, a mere nothing. If the machine should keep a proper situation to drink, to sing, to laugh, and dance; a thousand other chances may start up to disappoint the promised joy; which if you reach, fruition itself will deceive your hopes, and leave you nothing but anxiety and remorse.

This is what can never happen to me, though all my bright expectations should prove a fiction. As soon as I reach the fatal period, I shall be past reflection. My gaudy hopes and being will end at once, and leave me for ever insensible of my loss. In the mean time, as long as the dream of life lasts, the very prospect of boundless and immortal pleasures must give the mind a greater satisfaction in mere speculation, than all those fleeting imperfect enjoyments, whose fallacy you every moment discover.

Let my plan of happiness be ever so visionary, it is noble; let it be invented by the craft of priests or politicians, it is superior to all the luxury by which the greatest libertine ever proposed to gratify his desires.

Riches and grandeur, wine and mirth, music and beauty, are the height of your wishes: but all these either fatigue the mind with anxiety, or languish and sleep on the senses. You have often owned to me, that a series of these enjoyments has left you nothing but vanity and vexation; and have, in your reasonable intervals, confessed, that these are no more than specious names, and shadows of some *original good*, that the mind, through every disguise, pursues.

This is the supreme excellence after which my soul aspires. If it is imaginary, the mind must yet be enlarged, by grasping at the enjoyment of infinite happiness. For I dare confess, my end is the

the same with yours : it is pleasure we both pursue ; and as at present it consists chiefly in expectation, mine must surpass yours by the proportion of its object.

You have set your night for the opera, to hear Faustina sing ; I expect the period, when the curtain of mortality shall be drawn, and the scenes of eternal glories open, and angels solace me with celestial harmony.

The flowery spring returns to love, and your soft retirement in one of the fairest seats in England entertains you ; while my imagination wanders through the heavenly paradise, and recreates itself by blissful streams among the trees of life.

You attend the happy period, that, after long impatience, shall give the charming Zephalinda to your vows ; while a diviner flame animates my soul, in the search of infinite perfection.

But tell me whence this wond'rous flame began,
Ye angels, who behold the face of God !
I call the worms my brethren, and confess,
Corruption is my father ; yet high as yours
My wishes rise ; the same divine ambition,
The same bright object kindles my desires.

O lovelier than the fairest of thy works,
Nothing below thyself, great as thou art,
Exalted and supreme—nothing below
Thyself can ever fix my restless thought.
These faculties were made alone for thee,
Or I had never rais'd a wish so high.

Necessity of nature leads me on ;
My reason has no theme, my life no end.
Love, the superior passion of my soul,
Finds nothing equal to its dignity.

Give all the fun goes round to those that seek
A happiness beneath the sov'reign good :
One gentle look, one heavenly smile of thine,
Has blotted every charm from nature's face,
And faded all the glory of the world.

Why dost thou bid me listen to the voice
Of nature, in her just melodious round ?

Why

Why dost thou bid me trace the flow'ry fields,
The spring's gay verdure, or with wond'ring eyes
Survey the circle of the firmament?

What is there lovely on the spacious earth,
Or in th' ethereal round, compar'd to thee?
Compar'd to thee, the stars can boast no light;
The sun itself, in modest clouds conceal'd,
Pays homage to the great eternal spring,
Of sacred life, and uncreated light.

Whate'er at utmost stretch the mind of man
Can form, in its unbounded range of thought,
Of bright, or fair, or justly regular,
When fancy launches out to worlds unknown,
And paints beyond created beauty fair,
Still thou art fairer and more perfect still.

I know, my Lord, you will pardon this poetical excursion, since I have been led to it by your example.

I need not make an apology for continuing to insult you with my privileges, since I have no design in it but what is abstractly disinterested and charitable. A place of trust or honour employs your thoughts, and calls for your perpetual attendance; and when you think yourself secure of the gaudy trifle, your pretensions may be lost by a momentary caprice. But my expectations run higher than any dignity this world can boast. It is a celestial crown and kingdom that fires my ambition; I am in pursuit of infinite honours, and grasp the glories of immortality.

You see, my Lord, in every respect, in love and glory, I have the advantage of you. Suppose my pretensions as visionary as you will, nothing can be more exalted than such a notion of happiness. It is endless and complete, unclouded with pain or sorrow; whereas you can never boast of being perfectly at ease, nor to taste pleasure unmingled with many mortifying evils. In your gayest flights, you cannot flatter yourself with such views.

But this prospect is all peaceful and serene; not a moment's anxiety shall rise, to break the series
of

of eternal joy. Whatever holy cheat laid the plan, it is no dishonour to be thus deluded. Let poets, priests, or politicians, be the inventors, a thousand times blessed be the happy genius that provided this relief to soften the chagrin of mortal life ; when, tired and sick of all mortal vanities, the mind reposes itself in fragrant bowers, sports on flowery lawns, and wanders through Elysian groves ; when the raptured fancy drinks at the fountains of life, and bathes in rivers of immortal pleasure !

Death, the gloomy period of all your hopes, in the height of your luxury, and most jovial entertainments, insults your imagination with his horrid aspect. But this ghastly phantom, this universal terror, brightens into a smile ; and in an angel's form, beckons me away to endless rest. That untried gulf, that you expect will at once swallow up your joys and your existence, appears to me a passage to undecaying life and pleasure.

And let it still be granted, that my expectation of future bliss proves a fiction, and Christianity a mere delusion ; I shall be insensible of remorse or shame for my credulity ; and shall lie down as gloriously with the clods of the valley, and sleep as sweetly in my primitive dust as your Lordship.

But, oh ! should the objects of the Christian faith prove true, what a wild hazard do you run ! What limits will your confusion find ! Your shame will be as lasting as your misery. You will reproach yourself for ever, and be exposed to the derision of the wretched society to which you are joined.—

Il n'y a rien plus reel que cela, ni de plus terrible, faisons tant que nous voudrons les braves. “ There is “ nothing more real than that, nothing more terrible, let us put on never so many stout airs.”

I have, you find, obeyed your commands, and sent you my thoughts on this subject ; to convince your Lordship how much I am,

Your devoted humble servant,

EVANDER.

L E T T E R

LETTER VII.

From Herminius to his sister, acquainting her with the happy effects of his passion for Cleora.

My dear sister,

IT is with great pleasure I obey your command, in letting you know the disposition of my heart to the charming Cleora. To one whose thoughts were less refined than yours, my discourse would be incredible; but you are a sort of Platonic, and may perhaps approve the effects of a generous passion, and give credit to the reformation it has made in my life.

You will forgive me, Madam, for being once in the right, when I have dissented from you, since it is the only instance I have to boast of. Had I been governed by your advice, and fled the fair Cleora, instead of conversing with her, I might have been an unreformed libertine. But she set virtue in my view with its most charming advantages: I saw an angel in her form, and heard celestial music in her voice. She was the messenger of the skies to convert me; I owned the credentials, and yielded to the heavenly inspiration.

You know, my dear sister, that her dawning beauty had made an impression on my heart before I went to travel.

“ I watch’d the early glories of her eyes,
“ As men for day-break watch the eastern skies.”

Dryden.

I left England with the flattering hopes of finding her free at my return, and with a full intention to make my addresses to her. While I staid at Rome, that imperial seat of vice, the only loose amour I had was with a beautiful Italian, who something resembled the matchless Cleora, who was still the mistress of my reasonable affections.

But how great was the anguish of my soul, when, after all my gay expectations, the first news that

L.

surprised

surprised me at my return was, that she was just married to Philaret ! the man that of all the world I would not have hated or injured ; a man that had every amiable quality, and was the pride and joy of all his acquaintance ; nor could I forget some former obligations his popular interest had laid on me. In this exigence I resolved to dispense with the ceremony of paying my compliments to him, that I might avoid the sight of his lovely bride ; nor did I frequent any public place where I was likely to meet her.

But at last the fatal interview came ; and in the drawing-room, sparkling as an angel, I saw the lovely creature. From this moment I became an apostate to virtue ; and, secretly renouncing all the ties of truth and honour, resolved, with great deliberation, to be a villain. This noble design was the subject of my retired contemplations. With what wild, what impious soliloquies, have I whispered to the groves and streams, wishing the laws of Heaven cancelled, and the state of nature, in the fiction of a golden age, real : these senseless lines have often expressed my infamous raptures *.

*O siecle plus heureux mille fois pour les hommes,
Que le siecle dur ou nous sommes !
Non parceque la terre en cet age parfait
Donnoit tous les fruits sans culture,
Que les fleuves estoient de lait,
Que le miel dans nos bois couloit sur la verdure ;
Mais parceque l'honneur, ce tyran des nos ames,
Cette trompeuse idole, et ce phantome vain,
N'avoit sur les cœurs une pouvoir souverain,
Et ne s'opposoit pas aux amoureuses flammes.*

* O happy age ! a thousand times more blest'd,
Than the hard state by mortals now possess'd !
Nor because bounteous Nature did then yield
Her fruits spontaneous to the soil untill'd ;
Nor that the rivers flow'd with milky waves,
Nor that the trees dropt honey from their leaves :
But because Honour, phantom of controul,
False airy idol, tyrant of the soul,
Then to our am'rous flames no bounds consign'd,
Then knew no sov'reign power o'er the mind.

Such

Such were my secret extravagances, the entertainments of my solitary walks; but in the height of my folly, Heaven did not entirely abandon me.

I took all handsome opportunities to follow and converse with the fair Cleora; a favour she never refused me; if she had, I should have entertained more hopes, than from the manner in which she treated me. I attended her coach, her chair, haunted her at public places, ogled, stared, sighed, and practised all the modern sopperies of love; which she never thought it worth her while to observe: and, to my great mortification, I found I neither pleased nor molested her. All my dumb eloquence and mute address was lost on her; she minded it no more, nor perhaps so much, as she would the frolics of a monkey. I might give myself what postures and airs I thought most becoming, and act the indolent, or languishing lover, without interruption: she looked as if she had no manner of apprehension what I was doing, or what I intended. My breath had been as well employed, in talking of darts and flames, to the plants and trees; the jargon was so perfectly unintelligible to her, that she either answered nothing to the purpose, or turned the discourse to some grave moral subject. †

And as she had the finest turn of wit, and the most graceful manner of speaking in the world, every thing she said made an impression on my soul; every vice on which she set a mark of infamy, though ever so modish, lost its credit with me; and every virtue, though ever so severe, seemed practicable with her applause.

The manner in which she treated my passion, set me in a very ridiculous light to myself. The vanity appeared unpardonable, that inspired me with the hopes of rivalling the happy man, to whom, in the sight of Heaven, with her vows, she had sincerely given her esteem and tenderest affections. Whatever regard was due to such distinguishing merit as Philaret's, she gave him. Nothing could be more soft and engaging than her

whole behaviour to him. Her modesty was unaffected, truth and justice appeared in all her actions. In the gayest bloom of youth, and triumph of beauty, she practised the strictest rules of piety. This, joined to the most gentle disposition, and a genius turned to every thing that is beautiful and polite, makes her one of the brightest characters of the age.

A thousand times blessed be the heavenly Power that kept me back from the ruin I courted; and, by the example and conversation of the lovely woman, made me a proselyte to virtue, and guided me to a rational and lasting happiness!

But, my dear sister, this fortunate event shall not encourage me to contemn your advice on any future occasion; and in this instance I know you will forgive,

Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant,

HERMINIUS,

LETTER VIII.

From Bellamcur to Carlos, relating the story of his love to Almeda.

I Am glad to find you so entirely satisfied, so completely blessed, amidst the noise and amusements of the town. I congratulate your enjoyment of assemblies, operas, and masquerades. But all your boasted pleasures cannot raise my envy at present, nor tempt me back from the country.

My mind is in such a fantastic disposition, that I find more satisfaction in talking to trees, streams, and echoes, than to reasonable creatures. I converse frequently with a row of willows, that grow on the banks of a neighbouring river, and have often called them to witness what they neither hear nor understand. The streams are often swelled with my tears, without ever rising to a deluge; and the rocks melted at my complaints without losing one atom of their bulk.

Est

But while I laugh at myself, I shall easily forgive you, if you should take the same liberty, and enter into the ridicule of my character. You are a lover yourself of the modern jovial kind, quite the reverse of the solemn antiquated form of Pastor Fido, Don Quixote, and your humble servant.

All this raillery is forced, and only used in policy, that I may tell my story with a good grace to a man of your gaiety.

You know how the young Elvira was left to my father's care by her mother; and, by a contract between both our parents, was, from her childhood, designed a wife for me. But neither her beauty nor vast fortune have had the least influence on me to make any addresses to her. I have conversed with her with great indifference, and thought I had reason to believe she had the same for me. But my father, in order to make good his engagements, when he was on his death-bed, desired me to promise him, with the greatest solemnity, to marry her. As he had been the best of parents, I promised him, without any reluctance, on condition Elvira did not refuse me; of which I had some secret hopes. However, as I then had no other inclination, I was in no manner of care whether she accepted or refused me.

But when I was last in town, and walking in the Mall, I met one of the most agreeable women I ever saw. She was tall, and exactly shaped; her eyes large and fine; with something soft and pensive in her air; something of thought, of wit, of significancy, which I cannot express. Whether I then met my fellow-mind, that had been paired for me by destiny; or whether in some pre-existent state we had been acquainted, I know not; but I flattered myself she observed me without contempt. I spent my time in following, or endeavouring to meet her; and at last had made myself so remarkable, that she seemed to think herself obliged to avoid me. As far as I could, without being ridiculous by my curiosity, I inquired after her; but lest the walks uninformed who
she

he was. I was in a day or two forced to go into the country; where I was detained for some months, endeavouring in vain to forget the fair stranger I had seen.

In this temper I was taking a solitary ramble from my own seat, till I came to the entrance of a wood that was near the Earl of ———'s park. Here I found, surprising as a heavenly vision, the lovely form that had charmed me, sitting with a Milton in her hand; which she was reading with such attention, that I spoke to her before she saw me. She immediately withdrew into the park: but I followed her, and told her, the happiness of my life depended on her attention; which, in the most modest manner she at last granted, and heard the soft relation. That little success gave me such hopes, that I pursued the affair on every opportunity I could prevail with her to give me. For, as my fortune and rank were superior to her's, which was only dependent, she acted with great caution; and convinced me, that she possessed all that true grandeur of mind that conscious virtue inspires. Her wit, the elegance of her behaviour, with a thousand graces that attended her whole conduct, secured her conquest, and confined all my hopes of earthly happiness to the possession of the charming maid. Nor did I fear the least obstacle to my wishes; for I had told her my engagement to my father, and the full certainty I had (as indeed I thought) of Elvira's refusal; which I now went to ask, with a perfect assurance that I should receive it. Her coldness did not seem to have the air of affectation, but rather the effect of a secret aversion. I looked on myself to be a sort of incumbrance entailed on her by her ancestors, of which she would be joyfully freed; and, in the gaiety of my heart, made her an offer of my person, such as it was, without the least expectation of being accepted; as I was, to my unspeakable confusion. She perceived my disappointment with a modest, but tender concern; and put me into a disorder that I could not easily recover.

I knew my love to the beautiful Almeda was a secret to every body but ourselves; and if it had been known, I would do Elvira the justice to confess, there was a sweetness in her temper, almost incapable of malice. However, I durst not discover the affair without Almeda's consent: to whom I went, in the height of my distress, to let her know the disappointment. She grew pale at the relation, sunk into my arms, and only spoke with tears; but soon left me, without letting me know her resolution, till within a few hours I received the inclosed.

To Bellamour.

" I Beg you to forget, and never think of seeing
 " me again; nor let any thing tempt you to
 " violate your engagement to a dying father.
 " It would be barbarous in you to abandon the
 " fair Elvira, who was an orphan cast on the pro-
 " tection of your family. Do not entertain one
 " anxious thought for me: I was the care of
 " Providence when I was unknown to you, and
 " that will be my refuge in all future distress.
 " —Adieu for ever.

ALMEDA."

I am just going to discover our mutual passion to Elvira, and to show her this letter, in hopes that compassion will prevail with her to refuse me; and cannot but flatter myself with success, from the gentleness of her disposition. I am, in all the changes of fortune,

*My dear Carlos,
 Sincerely yours,*

BELLAMOUR.

[See the sequel of this story in letter 17. part II.]

LETTER IX.

*To Philario, from the Duke of ——. Written on
 his death-bed.*

BEfore you receive this, my final state will be determined by the Judge of all the earth:

in

in a few days at most, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable sentence will be passed, that shall raise me to the heights of happiness, or sink me to the depths of misery. While you read these lines, I shall be either groaning under the agonies of absolute despair, or triumphing in fullness of joy.

It is impossible for me to express the present disposition of my soul, the vast uncertainty I am struggling with. No words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehensions. Every doubt wears the face of horror; and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for some faint beams of hope, which dart across the tremendous gloom. What tongue can utter the anguish of a soul suspended between the extremes of infinite joy, or eternal misery! I am throwing my last stake for eternity, and tremble and shudder for the important event.

Good God! how have I employed myself! what enchantment has held me! in what delirium has my life been passed! what have I been doing! while the sun in its race, and the stars in their courses, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition.

I never waked till now. I have but just commenced the dignity of a rational being. Till this instant I had a wrong apprehension of every thing in nature: I have pursued shadows, entertained myself with dreams; I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the wind. I look back on my past life; and, but for some memorials of infamy and guilt, it is all a blank, a perfect vacancy. I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants in the woods, to much better purpose, than any for which I have lived. And oh! but for some faint hope, a thousand times more blessed had I been to have slept with the clods of the valley, and never heard the almighty *Fiat*, nor waked into life at his command!

I never had a just apprehension of the solemnity

ty of the part I am to act, till now. I have often met death insulting on the hostile plain, and with a stupid boast, defied his terrors. With a courage as brutal as that of the warlike horse, I have rushed into the battle, laughed at the glittering spear, and rejoiced at the sound of the trumpet; nor had a thought of any state beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal, to which I must have been summoned;

Where all my secret guilt had been reveal'd,
Nor the minutest circumstance conceal'd.

It is this which arms Death with all its terrors; else I could still mock at fear, and smile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath, it is not being for ever insensible, is the thought at which I shrink; it is the terrible *hereafter*, the something beyond the grave, at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious brains; these start forth, and dare me now in their most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach? What extravagance is it to jest with death! to laugh at damnation! to sport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery!

Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it would be as ill-bred as to entertain a dying friend with the sight of an Harlequin, or the rehearsal of a farce. Every thing in nature seems to reproach this levity in human creatures. The whole creation but man is serious;—man, who has the highest reason to be so, while he has affairs of infinite consequence depending on his short uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greatest part of mankind go on with such a thoughtless gaiety to their graves.

Oh, my Philario, with what horror do I recall those hours of vanity we have wasted together!

Return, ye lost neglected moments! how should I prize you above the eastern treasures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me rest on the cold earth; let me converse in cottages; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celestial happiness.

Ye vain grandeurs of a court! ye sounding titles, and perishing riches! what do ye now signify? what consolation, what relief can ye give me?

I have had a splendid passage to the grave. I die in state, and languish under a gilded canopy; I am expiring on soft and downy pillows, and am respectfully attended by my servants and physicians: my dependents sigh, my sisters weep; my father bends beneath a load of years and grief; my lovely wife, pale and silent, conceals her inward anguish; my friend, the generous Pylades, who was as my own soul, suppresses his sighs, and leaves me to hide his secret grief.

But, oh! which of these will answer my summons at the high tribunal? which of them will bail me from the arrest of death? who will descend into the dark prison of the grave for me?

Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathless clay; which perhaps may lie reposed in state, while my soul, my only conscious part, may stand trembling before my Judge. My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great solemnity, will lay the senseless corpse in a stately monument, inscribed with

“ Here lies the great ”——

But could the pale carcase speak, it would soon reply,

—— ——— “ False marble, where ?

“ Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

Cowley.

While some flattering panegyric is pronounced at my

my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, my dear Philario, till we meet in the world of spirits.

L E T T E R X.

From Celadon, to Amasia, who had seduced him into a criminal love for her.

TOO lovely Amasia! whither have you led my heedless steps? into what paths of destruction have you seduced me? I have done an action which will never bear the reflection of reason; an action that will stamp an endless stain on my character, and with which my conscience loudly reproaches me.

I have sinned against all the ties of honour and gratitude. The generous man I have wronged, was the guardian of my childhood, and the guide of my yet unexperienced youth. I am entering into the world under his conduct and protection: he has been more than a father to me; never was a trust discharged with greater tenderness and fidelity. May Heaven return it in a thousand blessings on his head!—Should he ever leave an orphan like me exposed, may it meet the same justice and humanity I have found from him. But, oh! may it never make such a return! Let such villainy never stain his noble race, nor leave a blemish on his name.

These thoughts bring back to my memory all his gentle treatment; awake my young affections, and melt me into childish tears.—O, could they wash away my guilt, and restore me back to virtue!

—————“ Yet I’ll look up.
“ My fault is past. But, oh! what form of prayer
“ Can serve my turn!”

*Shakespeare.
Curl’s*

Curse on the maxims of the world, and that impropriety of language, that would disguise the basest of crimes, with the names of amusement and gallantry ! Let me be singular, let me be unpolite, let me be unfashionably good, if I can but keep my peace, and justify myself to my own conscience ! Let me inviolably observe the rules of truth and justice, be fearless, and open to the inspection of God, and may everlasting reproach rest on all the modish appellations and refinements that would soften the horror of a base and treacherous action !

These were the principles in which the injured Altamont instructed me, and confirmed by his own great example. My mind had been elevated by the rehearsal of heroic actions, and a love to the public interest ; by a philosophic fortitude, and the command of my passions. Such were the motives that governed me, till the fatal day came that made you a bride to the deluded Altamont ; from which unhappy period I may date my apostacy from virtue. You taught me softer maxims, and perverted the noble ardor of my soul, into loose and infamous designs ; while you caressed me with an open freedom, which my early years, and your husband's affection for me too easily excused.

Till then I had been a stranger to love ; and, thoughtless of danger, left myself unguarded to all your charms ; ignorant whither the growing passion led, nor thought the pleasure criminal which I took in your conversation. But I was soon softened into sin, and unwarily took in the deadly poison, while you indulged the guilty inclination, and soothed me into ruin.

What infernal delusion perverted your judgment, when you preferred me to the man to whom you had given your vows ? The vainest of all your sex might have limited her ambition with such a conquest. If the most agreeable person, the best temper, joined with unblemished equity to man, and piety to God, ever claimed esteem, he might justly challenge it from all that knew him.

But

But he had a right to your affection by a thousand tender engagements, and by his entire confidence in your fidelity; not from any credulity of temper, but from his own innate honour, and a soul incapable of treachery or distrust. With an artifice which only hell could teach, you have secured the esteem of a man, who in all things else acts with the greatest judgment and penetration.

It was the disguise I saw you practise, that recalled me back to truth and honour. In your crime I perceived my own guilt, and abhorred the monstrous part I had been acting. While he, my guardian, my protector, had been fatiguing himself with cares and journies, to secure me from wrongs and injustice; I, in his own house, proved a traitor to his honour, and invaded the most sacred rights of his affection.—O that he would appear to my view an enemy, a villain, any thing but a friend and benefactor! These titles confound and pierce my soul with the most exquisite torments.

The fever, from which I am just recovered, was not half so threatening to my life, as the expressions of his kindness; when, with the tenderness of a father, and the benignity of a friend, he watched my languishing intervals, and discovered the most affectionate concern for my life. How exquisite was my remorse! Nothing but the dread of eternal vengeance could have kept me from putting an end to that life for which he shewed such an unfeigned concern.

My crime stood in all its aggravations before me. The secret sense of my guilt was worse than death or infamy: I abhorred the disguise of virtue, by which I deceived him. No consideration but his happiness, could have restrained me from confessing my villainy, and giving myself up to his just reproaches and vengeance. I could have smiled on Death, and welcomed the fatal stroke from his hand, could that have been an expiation for my guilt.

But

But I had my peace to make with Heaven, and found another sort of expiation necessary to secure me from divine vengeance ; so that as much as I was tired with life, death was no refuge ; nor could I fly to the grave as a sanctuary. Yet, as soon as ever my health permits, I am fully determined to make myself an exile from my native country, and fly the sight of my injured friend for ever. But,

— — — Where shall I find refuge ?

No barb'rous nation will receive a guilt
So much transcending theirs, but drive me out !
The wildest beasts will hunt me from their dens,
And birds of prey molest me in the grave.

I dare not see you, Madam, to take a last farewell. You have beauty, and I am human ; and, after these convictions, should the dangerous flame again kindle, I must sin away all hopes of forgiveness from God or man. Make what reparation you can to the best of husbands, by your future conduct. It is the last advice you will receive from

The unhappy CELADON.

L E T T E R XI.

To my Lord —, from a statesman.

My Lord,

YOUR commands are very obliging, in giving me an opportunity to be impertinent, by entering into a detail of my solitary amusements, in this absolute retreat from all the polite and agreeable part of society. It is well I have your gracious indulgence to talk of myself, and be the hero of my own romance : for, without vanity, I meet nothing here more considerable ; nor is it without justice that I claim the privilege of personating the superior part in the drama.

Indeed I was never more sensible of my own dignity. Abstract from business or diversion, my
mind

mind retires within itself; where it finds treasures till now undiscovered, capacities formed for infinite objects, desires that stretch themselves beyond the limits of this wide creation, in search of the great Original of life and pleasure. I find new powers exerting their energy, some latent exercises, which till now I have been a stranger to. I have indeed heard from the men who teach such holy fables, (as I then thought them), that the soul was immortal, and capable of celestial joys. But I rather wished than believed these transporting truths; and put them on a level with the poets rosy bowers, their myrtle shades, and soft Elysian fields. But now I am convinced of their evidence, and triumph in the privileges of my own being. I rejoice to think, that the moment I begun to exist, I entered on an eternal state, and commenced a duration that shall run parallel to that of the supreme and self-existent Mind.

This prospect animates me with a divine ambition, and casts a reproach on all created glory. The world vanishes; its charms and soft allurements are no more: a veil is cast on mortal beauty, the spell is broken, the enchantment dissolved.

You smile, I know, and take this for an imaginary triumph, a sort of cowardly insult, in the absence of an enemy. You will tell me, this contempt of grandeur appears with an ill grace, in one that has the possession of a splendid post in the government. But this, my Lord, is what has given me a just opinion of the world, and of myself. A constant series of success and prosperity has convinced me, that the whole creation cannot make me blessed. My ambitious designs have never been disappointed: in love, by a strange caprice of the sex, I have been always fortunate. But whatever pleasure I pursued, the enjoyment always undeceived or disgusted me. Sometimes I was too-wise, and sometimes too capricious to be pleased.

Why am I not at rest? Why cannot these objects satisfy, or at least delude me with a dream of happiness? Why must I so exactly balance the weight

weight of evil, that mingled with every good? Had I these reflecting powers to make me thus nicely miserable? I am reasoning away all the satisfaction of human life, and growing wise to desperation. I cannot so much as amuse myself with an airy hope. I have tried all the vanities below the sun, and there is no novelty left to flatter me; I know the utmost that beauty and greatness can give, and am cured of love and ambition by experimental evidence.

What a paradise, what lasting joys, did I promise myself in the possession of the admired Aspasia! The yielding beauty, by granting my desires, lost my esteem; her charms vanished, her wit was impertinence, and her artifice disgusted me. This put a period to my gallantries. The women were no longer angels, but mere erring mortals; with whom I conversed on a level, without any temptation to idolatry. Balls and assemblies, dancing and dress, were no longer the subjects of my serious application, nor the supreme design of my being. I no longer interested myself in the success of any modish entertainment. With great moderation I heard the grand controversy, Who sung best, Cuzzoni or Faustina? and I left the important truth to be decided by more capable judges. I yielded an implicit assent to every well-dressed critic, who affirmed Mrs ——— was the best actress of Polly in the Beggar's Opera; and never betrayed any intemperate zeal, or breach of charity, against those who dissented. I knew every beau and fine lady in Great Britain had a right to judge for themselves; and that being too positive, might endanger the public peace.

But these soft follies were only discarded for more specious vanities. Distinction and power, titles and equipage, now employed my thoughts; ambition took full possession of my soul.—I reached the envied height, and made myself gloriously miserable. The period from whence I resolved to date my happiness, began with distrust and anxiety. Instead of friends, I found myself sur-
rounded

rounded with flatterers, and mercenary dependents. Impatient and fatigued with the crowd, I sometimes withdrew to my apartment, and, in solitary grandeur, tried what joys the contemplation on my quality and titles could give.

"The Most Noble! — The Right Honourable!"

"Ye potent words! (I cried), where is your ene-

gy? — Ye mighty sounds, that once fired my

soul! where is your accustomed force? Have

ye no pleasing magic to still the tempest with-

in? — Ye boasted names of trust and power!

why can ye no longer recreate my spirits, nor

solace my moments of leisure and retirement?

Is there nothing in the glittering coronet, this

popular toy, to divert me? While I am sur-

rounded with the pageantries of state, and see

so many badges of my own dignity, why does

not my mind elate itself, and brighten into ec-

stasy?" One would think it impossible to be

splenetic, with such panegyrics, and elegant

dedications before me. Here I find myself

a hero, a warrior, a virtuoso; and,

to sum up all, a benefactor to mankind.

This darling thought, of my own

good qualities, ought to should gladden

my heart, and exalt my dignity; and

yet really, my Lord, as the subject

of my own merit is, it would not wake me

awake, if the vexations of state were not

My late indisposition has given me leave

to withdraw from public affairs.

romantic retreat, surrounded with a variety

of woods, green lawns, and flowers,

in their uncultivated beauty. Here I rove

at ease and free, with no circumstance of

but the consciousness of a reasonable and

tal being. I have the joy to find I can stand

on my own legs, and move from place to place with

spontaneous motion, without the assistance of

a painted machine, the prudence of my coachman,

and the vigour of my horses.

I have tried what delights were to be found in

N

madness

madness and folly, and am now in pursuit of what wisdom and philosophy can yield. In the fair creation I trace an Almighty Power, and see the immense Divinity impressed on all his works. Inspired with a charming enthusiasm, I address the great Spirit of nature, in these soliloquies.

“ Ye woods and wilds, receive me to your shade !
“ These still retreats my contemplation aid :
“ From mortals flying to your chaste abode,
“ Let me attend th’ instructive voice of God !
“ He speaks in all, and is in all things found ;
“ I hear him, I perceive him all around :
“ In Nature’s lovely and unblemish’d face,
“ With joy his sacred lineaments I trace.
“ O glorious Being ! O supremely fair !
“ How free, how perfect thy productions are !
“ Forgive me, while with curious eyes I view
“ Thy works, and boldly thus thy steps pursue.
“ The silent valley, and the lonely grove
“ I haunt ; but oh ! ’tis thee I seek and love.
“ ’Tis not the chant of birds, nor whisp’ring breeze,
“ But thy soft voice I seek among the trees.
“ Invoking thee, by silver streams I walk,
“ To thee in solitary shades I talk.
“ I speak thy dear-lov’d name, nor speak in vain ;
“ Kind echoes long the pleasing sound retain.
“ Reviving sweets the op’ning flowers disclose,
“ Fragrant the violet, and the budding rose ;
“ But all their balmy sweets from thee they steal,
“ And something of thee to my sense reveal.
“ Fair look the stars, and fair the morning-ray,
“ When first the fields their painted scenes display ;
“ Glorious the sun in his meridian height !
“ And yet, compar’d to thee, how faint the light !
“ Ador’d Artificer ! what skill divine !
“ What wonders in the wide creation shine !
“ Order and majesty adorn the whole,
“ Beauty and life, and thou th’ inspiring soul.
“ Whatever grace or harmony’s express’d
“ On all thy works, the God is there confess’d.

“ But

“ But oh ! from all thy works, how small a part,
 “ To human minds, is known of what thou art !
 “ Fancy gives o’er its flight in search of thee ;
 “ Our thoughts are lost in thy imminency.”

The thoughts are my own ; but I am modest enough to confess the cadence and rhyme are borrowed ; and, as you are a patron of the muses, I believed the harmony would please you. But you are certainly overjoyed to find the rapture is finished ; and that, after this elevation, I am composed enough to subscribe myself,

Your Lordship’s

Most devoted

humble servant,

PHILANDER.

LETTER XII.

To Myrtillo, from a physician, giving him an account of his falling in love with a fair stranger.

My dear Myrtillo,

THE engagement I am under to attend the Earl of ——— in his illness, will detain me longer in the country than I designed ; nor is this the only motive that has kept me here.

I can conceal nothing of importance, without a breach of that confidence I have in you ; nor can I deny myself the pleasure of telling the tender story of my cure.

You will be surprised that the person who conversed in the Mall, the Playhouse, and Opera, with such indifference, should turn lover in the country. But it is a serious truth, and will not admit of raillery. All my earthly happiness is in suspense, and depends on the success of this passion.

Nor will you censure me, when I tell you, that my conqueror is the lovely stranger that appeared in public last winter with the Duchess of ———. I did not see her then ; and if I had, business or

diversion might have guarded me from the soft surprise: but all nature, every alluring circumstance, conspired here to vanquish and enchant me.

The evening was fair, and with Mr Thomson's excellent poem on Summer in my hand, I took a walk, and read by intervals, till all my soul was composed and harmonious.

" These are the haunts of meditation, these
 " The scenes where ancient bards th' inspiring
 " breath
 " Ecstatic felt; and from the world retir'd,
 " Convers'd with angels, and immortal forms,
 " On heav'nly errand bent—to save the fall
 " Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice,
 " To hint pure thoughts, and warn the favour'd
 " soul
 " For future trials fated to prepare."

In this visionary temper I had wandered about a mile from the Earl of ——'s gardens and park, till I entered a winding valley, green and flowery as the Elysian fields. A silver stream ran murmuring along the middle, and willows in equal order adorned the banks. It was not perfect nature; something of art appeared, but in the most agreeable negligence. There were many little mossy seats raised along the sides of the river; but what pleased me most was a grotto, which looked like the retirement of some sylvan deity. I entered, and lost myself in a pleasing contemplation, till the sight of the most charming object I ever beheld surprised me. She seemed

" Fairer than fam'd of old, or fabled since
 " Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
 " By errant knights."—————

Milton.

Her shape and features were perfectly regular; her complexion clear as the light.——But I might as well paint virtue or harmony, as describe the graces of her mien and aspect, in which there
 was

was nothing of that gay and thoughtless vivacity that most of her sex think so becoming; but something so serious and composed, something that expressed a mind within conscious of its own dignity and heavenly original. She advanced till she came near the arbour that concealed me; and then, seating herself on the bank of the river, in a pensive posture, leaning her cheek on her hand, white as the new-fallen snow, with a soft and graceful accent, she repeated the following lines out of Sir Richard Blackmore's fine poem on the creation.

" Thy force alone, Religion, death disarms
 " Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms,
 " Soften'd by thee, the grisly form appears.
 " No more the horrid object of our fears,
 " We undismay'd this awful pow'r obey,
 " That guides us thro' the safe, tho' gloomy way,
 " Which leads to life."———

I heard her with a very tender concern; because there appeared something in her complexion too delicate for a state of confirmed health, which was perhaps what led her to such a serious thought. While she was going on, a spruce footman came to tell her supper was ready, and her father waited for her. She rose immediately, and followed the man at some distance. When they were gone, my curiosity ventured some paces forward; and, at the end of the walk, I perceived a pretty romantic pile of building, where she entered. But the evening grew dusky, and I hastened back to the Earl's seat; and, retiring to my apartment, passed my time in writing this adventure; of which you shall hear the sequel in my next.

But I am grown a lover in one fatal moment; and, in this deplorable circumstance, am

Your most humble servant,

LEANDER.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIII.

To the same, relating the death of his mistress.

MY last informed you in what a serious passion I was engaged; but the tragedy is now finished, and I am past the possibility of being happy in this world.

A few days after my last adventure, there came a messenger from a neighbouring gentleman, for me to attend one of the family who was ill. I followed the servant, and found to my surprise, it was the house where all my hopes were confined. I was immediately conducted to the apartment of my patient, who proved the lovely woman I had seen in my last ramble. She was sitting in a chair, pale and negligent, but perfectly graceful in the height of her disorder.

No words can express my grief, when I found the symptoms of her distemper fatal. Indeed the distraction of my mind was so remarkable, that she could not but observe it; and, perceiving her own danger in my concern, she asked me, without the least emotion, "If I was surprised to find her mortal?" but she desired me, "since it was a truth of which she was entirely convinced, to speak my opinion without the least flattery or caution."

This true greatness of mind confirmed my esteem, and heightened my concern for her life. But I was in the last exigence what to reply. I durst not flatter her in the common strain of my profession; nor could I imitate that insensibility which the young heroine acted, in an event on which the future happiness of my life depended.

I was ashamed to weep; but while sorrow kept me silent, the dying beauty told me, some intervals of disorder she lately felt, had made the darkness of the grave, and the solemnity of a death-bed, familiar scenes to her imagination. "Waiting for my last hour (added she) without consternation,

“ nation, I find this mortal structure sinking into
 “ the dust; but methinks I find the nobler powers
 “ of my soul kindling into life and immortality.”

What are the laurels and trophies of conquerors compared to this scene of triumph ! which now I could have envied. But my charming patient desired she might try to rest ; and I retired, resolving not to go from the house till I saw the event. She lay as if she slept till the morning ; when I was hastily called, and found her past all hopes, but of a few hours life. Her senses were perfect, and a sort of languishing beauty adorned her face, charming beyond all the vivacity of health.

These were some of her last words, uttered with a faint but pleasing accent, the sound of which I shall never forget.

“ O Death ! how hast thou disguised thy ter-
 “ rors, and put on an angel’s form to approach
 “ me ! What welcome, what transporting tidings
 “ hast thou brought me ! I come, thou kind mes-
 “ senger of my liberty and happiness ; I obey thy
 “ gentle invitation.

“ When shall the curtain fall, and these bless’d eyes
 “ Meet all the dazzling wonders of the skies ?
 “ Oh, rend the hated veil, and take away
 “ The dull partition of this brittle clay !
 “ Come, heav’nly day, which ne’er shall see a cloud !
 “ Come, cheering smiles, from the bright face of
 [God.]

“ I see, methinks, the glimmering of celestial
 “ light, and bless the dawning of everlasting day.
 “ The shadows are flying, and the heavens open-
 “ ing their inmost glories before me. In a few
 “ moments I shall enter the eternal habitations,
 “ the dazzling recesses of the Most High ; whom
 “ I shall behold in full perfection, exalted in ma-
 “ jesty, and complete in beauty. My hopes are
 “ unbounded. I set no limits to my expectations ;
 “ for in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his
 “ right hand are pleasures for evermore.
 “ With these transporting scenes before me,
 “ what

" what glorious mortal could excite my envy ?
 " What scene of pleasure could the whole crea-
 " tion display to tempt me back ? The dark do-
 " minions of death which I am passing through,
 " not a captive, but a conqueror, through the
 " strength of my victorious Redeemer, who has
 " led in triumph all the powers of darkness. Mil-
 " lions of ages of happiness are before me ; the
 " prospect stretches to an unmeasurable length ;
 " my soul presses forward, and calls eternity itself
 " her own."

At these words, closing her eyes, with a smile
 she resigned her breath, and left me,

Your most unhappy friend,

LEANDER.

L E T T E R XIV.

*From Myrtilia to Hermione, giving an account of the
 fatal event of her brother's passion for her.*

My dear Hermione,

I Hope my last letter prepared you for the me-
 lancholy tidings which this brings you of my
 brother's death. I know the relation will heighten
 your grief, and renew my own sorrow ; but rea-
 son signifies nothing, and proves but an empty
 name, in the transport of such a tender passion as
 now possesses all my soul.

After the fatal time that my father had extorted
 a promise from my brother, and charged him on
 his blessing never to see you more, I perceived an
 alteration in the gaiety of his temper, with a vi-
 sible decay of his health ; but I could hardly per-
 suade myself love was the cause ; imagining the
 soft passion, in a youth of eighteen, was easily
 diverted from one fair object to another.

I was confirmed in this by his obliging and sub-
 missive behaviour to my father, whose conduct in
 this affair was indeed arbitrary and severe ; nor
 could I forbear making some secret reproaches on
 such

such a rigorous imposition, where there could be no objection made but to your fortune.

However, filial affection was certainly my brother's governing principle; and he still found some plausible excuses for that severe command, which cut off the brightest hopes he had of any earthly happiness. His piety always silenced my resentments, and pleaded my father's absolute right to dispose of him.

But as much as he endeavoured to disguise his passion from me, the inclosed will convince you of the inward anguish of his mind, which he gave me the day before he died, and charged me not to read it till his eyes were closed in death.

My father, in the utmost distress, looked on the expiring youth; but durst not examine into a secret, which would have given him the extremest regret to discover. My brother perceived his concern, and gave him all the consolation he could, by owning his paternal care of his principles and actions; and returned him the most pathetic acknowledgments, for the restraint his authority had put on some of his youthful follies. My father observed the kind intention of this discourse, which still added to the anguish of his soul.

"Be satisfied, my dear father, (said the dying youth), be satisfied with the determination of Heaven. I might have dragged out a long inglorious life, loaded with infamy and guilt."

Then, taking me by the hand, with a heavenly smile on his face, he said, "Adieu, my dear sister; I am rather falling into a gentle sleep, than dying. I feel no pain, and all within is peaceful and calm." And then closing his eyes, with a soft voice he repeated these words, and with them resigned his breath.

The angels call, they call me from above,
And bid me hasten to the realms of love,
My soul with transport hears the happy doom;
I come, ye gentle messengers, I come:

Earth flies, with all the charms it has in store,
 Its snares and gay temptations are no more.
 While heav'n appears, and the propitious skies
 Unveil their inmost glories to my eyes,
 To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu,
 And ask no more the rising sun to view :
 For oh ! the light himself, with rays divine,
 Breaks in, and God's eternal day is mine.

After this moving story, whether I ought in prudence to let you see the inclosed, I cannot determine ; but it is not in my power to keep it a secret from my most faithful friend. It will shew my brother's height of virtue, in commanding a passion so tender and fatal.

I am unalterably yours,

MYRTILLA.

This is the letter he gave me sealed the day before he died, with a charge not to open it till after he was dead.

To Myrtilla.

“ My dear sister,

“ **W**Hatever care I have taken hitherto to conceal
 “ my folly, I now confess it, that the fatal effect
 “ may warn you from giving up yourself to the
 “ government of an immoderate passion. It was
 “ this that hastened my early destiny, and cut off
 “ all the noble ends of life.

“ My love to the beautiful Hermione was such
 “ an enchantment, that all the motives of reason
 “ and religion could not free me from it. The
 “ improvements of art and nature, the love of my
 “ country, and the public welfare, had no share
 “ in my thoughts. My piety was enervated, and
 “ the important end of my being neglected. I
 “ lived, and moved, and acted with no other
 “ design, but to please the caprice of my fair tyrant :

“ Till my father, with the highest reason, endeavoured to rescue me from the inglorious slavery. I was convinced of the kindness of his
 “ intention

" intention, and how much he consulted my honour and advantage, in putting me under a solemn obligation, never to see the object of my dotage more.

" With the utmost violence to my tender inclination I kept my promise, and fell a victim to the ties of filial piety and truth. What regard I paid to those sacred names, Heaven was my witness, and how sincerely I strove to conquer the unhappy passion that possessed me. Aided by a power divine, I at last recovered my reason; but my health hourly declined, and death is now advancing to release me from all the remainders of error and folly. The soft affections of my soul will be perfectly refined into a noble and heroic ardour. I am going to the fruition of immortal beauty, and unmingled pleasure; I shall gaze on the bright Original of all that is excellent and lovely; I shall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, speaking peace and unutterable ecstasy to my soul.

" Adieu, my dear Myrtilla, my much loved sister! May angels watch your steps, and keep you in the paths of virtue! Make it your study to soften my father's cares, and add no sorrow to his hoary age. I fear he will carry his grief for me to the grave; but oh! let him never know the excess of my folly. I charge you not to show him a word of this letter, nor once reflect on his well-meant severity. Farewell, till we meet in the blissful realms of love."

LETTER XV.

To Mr _____

S I R,

THE instances of Heathen virtue that you have collected, have something in them, I confess, noble and surprising; and your eloquence has set them in their full lustre and magnitude. But there is a name, the Christian boast and hope, that

that darkens all human glory ; and which, with a sort of pious insult, may be opposed to the most accomplished of your heroes.

The poem I have inclosed on this lofty subject, is a paraphrase on Mr Crawshaw's *hymn to the name of JESUS*; and there is little alteration of any thing but the language.

A Hymn to the name of JESUS.

A Wake, my soul ! my glory, rise and sing !
 Awake, and all thy sacred ardour bring !
 While for unusual flight I spread a tow'ring wing:
 Awake, my lute ! proud of the glorious theme,
 Let each harmonious string
 Tremble with rapt'rous joy, and speak the mighty name !
 Assist me, ev'ry gentle sound,
 Which studious art has found ;
 You that speak with silver strings,
 Or swell with tuneful breath,
 And lend the coward wings,
 To meet the face of death :
 You that in the rural strain,
 Echo through the peaceful plain,
 Delight the groves and charm the guiltless swain ;
 With you that various joys afford,
 Touch'd by a skilful hand,
 Which can the pow'rs of harmony command,
 And dance with graceful art along the tuneful chord :
 You that with vocal music please the ear,
 Your choicest strains prepare ;
 The springs which move our inmost thoughts you know,
 And can their fiercest rage controul,
 While from your lips torrents of pleasures flow,
 And overwhelm the soul.
 Let all that nature graceful calls, or sweet,
 In the glorious concert meet !
 Purling streams, and falling floods,
 Sighing winds, and whispering woods !

Let

Let ev'ry bird of tuneful throat
 Join his free ungovern'd note ;
 While hills and valleys catch the sacred strain,
 And everlasting echoes the bless'd sound retain !
 With JESUS we begin : his charming name
 Shall fill the spacious song,
 And yield an endless theme.
 To ev'ry note the joyful word we'll place ;
 Our soft preludiums this alone shall grace,
 And ev'ry cadence artfully prolong.
 New smiles already nature wears,
 All blooming looks and gay ;
 The brighten'd sun crown'd with fresh beams
 appears,
 And darts a clearer ray.

Transporting name !
 Whose accents to the ransom'd world proclaim
 Salvation and immeasurable grace,
 Peace and good-will to all the human race ;
 A purchas'd heav'n, an open'd paradise,
 Unbounded joys, and never-ending bliss.
 Stupendous love !

Can man for this ungrateful prove ?
 JESUS, the Saviour ! what rebellious knee
 Would not a ready homage pay to thee ?
 The martyrs glorious train,
 Thy noble votaries of old,
 In records of immortal fame inroll'd,
 Wore on their breast inscribed, thy mighty name.
 By this, with sacred fortitude inspir'd,
 With heav'nly zeal and transport fir'd,
 They ran upon the pointed spear,
 And leap'd into the flame ;
 Nor death could in a shape appear,
 But what with open arms they met,
 Despising all that rage could do, or proudest ty-
 rants threat.

Not hell itself their constancy could shake ;
 Its deepest stratagems they brake,
 Its wildest fury trampled down,
 And seiz'd with conqu'ring hands the everlasting
 crown.

JESUS

JESUS the signal for the fight they chose,
And gave a glorious onset to their foes.
In vain the pow'rs of earth and hell oppose.

"JESUS, our conquering chief!" they cry'd;
JESUS! aloud the sounding skies reply'd.
Exalted name!

From thee the burning seraphs catch their flame,
JESUS the God! 'tis they alone can tell,
What treasures in that title dwell.

You happy spirits that feel its emphasis,
By this you stand confirm'd in bliss,
And know what boundless joys are stor'd
In this important word.

The glorious subject only suits
The high-strain'd notes of your immortal lutes.
Then join the choir,

You bright musicians of the skies,
And with a well-proportion'd fire
Instruct us how to rise.

Let your bless'd harps the imperfect lay prolong,
Complete the bold design, and close the adven-
t'rous song.

L E T T E R XVI.

Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guilford Dudley.

WITH anguish that no force of words can tell,
In these sad lines I take my last farewell.
Could I with less reluctance part from thee,
Approaching death had no surprise for me;
That solemn prospect should my thoughts employ,
And banish ev'ry tender scene of joy.
But thou dost still return upon my soul;
What force the soft temptation can controul?
I meet thee still resistless in thy charms,
Sigh on thy breast, and languish in thy arms.

Oh, Guilford! 'tis no wretched love of life,
That fills my thoughts with this uneasy strife,
The flatt'ring blandishments of youthful years,
A promis'd kingdom, nor my country's tears.

For

For thee alone I'd live, for thee alone
 I took the fatal proffer of a crown.
 No fond ambition stain'd my guiltless mind,
 Inspir'd with passions of a gentler kind.
 With thee I would have chose some calm retreat,
 Far from the dull formalities of state.
 How careless, how serene my fleeting hours
 Had pass'd in shady walks, and fragrant bow'rs !
 Pleas'd with the murmurs of a smooth cascade,
 Or near some crystal fountain, while it play'd,
 Upon its flow'ry verge, with thee reclin'd,
 My voice I to the melting lute had join'd,
 And soothe thy soul with gentle strains of love,
 Answer'd by all the music of the grove.

Where rove my thoughts !—Afflict me, grace
 divine !

This last, this darling object, to resign !
 Forgive this frailty of my tender years,
 This guilty fondness, and these female tears.
 Yet Heav'n my witness stands, I would not buy
 Ev'n Guilford's life, with one inglorious lie ;
 Nor dare my tongue, for all these ample skies
 Contain, the form of sacred truth disguise.
 Be Rome, be hell, in their revengeful pride,
 Their flames, their racks, and tort'ring arts defy'd !
 A thousand glorious witnesses have stood
 For this great cause, and seal'd it with their blood.

Thou conqu'ring Leader of a shining train
 Of martyrs, for thy testimony slain !
 In thy victorious name I dare engage
 The utmost force of persecuting rage.
 To men, to angels, be my soul unveil'd,
 Nor any part of heav'nly truth conceal'd !
 The glorious cause that animates my breast,
 My lips with holy triumph shall attest ;
 Attest it with my last expiring breath,
 And smile in all the solemn pomp of death.

But darker scenes before my fancy rise,
 And nature, vanquish'd, sinks in the surprise.
 To shake my utmost virtue, 'tis decreed,
 That thou to Rome must first a victim bleed.

How

How shall thy wretched wife that stroke survive !
 An hour beyond will be an age to live.
 But, Guilford, keep thy sacred truth unstain'd,
 And half my immortality is gain'd.

Ye virgin saints, that, in your early bloom,
 From cruel tyrants met a fatal doom ;
 That dy'd the honour of the Christian faith,
 And boldly trode the same illustrious path !
 To animate the youthful suff'rer's breast,
 Appear in all your heav'nly glories drest ;
 Shew him your sparkling crowns, the bright reward
 For such distinguish'd constancy prepar'd ;
 Open your rosy bow'rs, ye blissful seats,
 Your gardens of delight, and soft retreats,
 Where gentle gales ambrosial odours blow,
 And springs of joy in endless currents flow ;
 With smiling visions recreate his soul,
 And ev'ry doubting anxious thought controul.

L E T T E R XVII.

Lord Guilford Dudley to Lady Jane Gray.

MAY ev'ry watchful angel guard thy life !
 My lovely princess, and my charming wife !
 For thee I importune the skies with pray'rs,
 And waste the tedious hours in gloomy cares.
 Were I from all the world but thee confin'd,
 I'd call my stars propitious still, and kind ;
 These prison-walls would prove a safe retreat,
 From all the restless factions of the great.
 Sink, curs'd Ambition, to thy native hell !
 And with thy kindred fiends for ever dwell !
 Were I, my fair, again possess'd of thee,
 What toys were kingdoms, and their crowns, to me !
 In glorious in some blissful shades I'd prove
 The silent joyss of unmolested love.

Why was thy birth deriv'd from ancient kings ?
 Our mis'ry from this fatal greatness springs.
 Indulgent love a gent'ler lot design'd,
 Nor form'd for public cares thy guiltless mind :

Thy

Thy thoughts were all employ'd on softer themes
 Tender and innocent as infants dreams :
 And yet—But Heaven the title disallows,
 A crown, methought, look'd glorious on thy brows.
 In ev'ry look, in all thy graceful mien,
 The brightest rays of majesty were seen ;
 Imperial beauty sparkled in thy eyes :
 I gaz'd with ecstasy, and new surprise ;
 A thousand times I press'd thy lovely hand,
 And cry'd, *'Twas form'd a sceptre to command.*

But these gay scenes for ever take their flight,
 Like some fantastical vision of the night.

Oh ! could my death the angry queen appease,
 Could that alone a raging faction please ;
 Unterrify'd I'd meet the public storm,
 And challenge death in ev'ry dreadful form.
 But, oh ! what horrors rise !—thy tender life !—
 What would I speak ? my lov'd, my beauteous wife !
 What counsel can thy wretched husband give ?
 On any terms I fain would have thee live.
 Forgive my stagg'ring faith, my coward heart ;
 My better thoughts disclaim this shameful part.
 What course can my distracting passions take,
 When thou, when truth, when heav'n itself's at
 stake ?

To endless darkness would I drag thee down,
 And poorly rob thee of a martyr's crown.
 May Heav'n forbid ! I'll be thy joyful guide,
 Nor shall the fatal stroke our souls divide.

O Death ! where is thy boasted conquest now ?
 Where are the frowns and terrors of thy brow ?
 Thou hast an angel's heav'nly form and air ;
 Pleasures and graces in thy train appear.
 Ten thousand kind transporting scenes arise ;
 Oh, come, my fair ! they call us to the skies.
 Beauties, like thee, in Nature's early pride,
 Undaunted, for their sacred faith have dy'd ;
 With their's, with all th' illustrious names of old,
 The British glory, thine shall be inroll'd.

L E T T E R XVIII.

*To Mrs ———**Madam,*

I Cannot say you have turned me into an angel; I have too much modesty to compliment you or myself with such miracles: but you have certainly given an elevation to my mind which I never before experienced. And, without any design but doing you justice, I may own, that, from a savage, I am become human: and, from a libertine, regular and consistent! from a lover, you have metamorphosed me into a reasonable creature. However odd this confession appears, this is making you a greater compliment than swearing you have made me a lunatic, and a madman. It is more glorious for you to be valued by a man in his right senses, than to be stared at by one quite out of his wits. My being more reasonable, does not argue that you are less amiable:

“ For inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,

“ And sanctity of manners, improve your charms.”

Addison.

You have convinced me that virtue is more than an empty name, that it is the most sacred reality. I see, I acknowledge the bright divinity. She insults my infidelity by a thousand modern instances of her power. Among the youthful and mature, the gentle and severe, she boasts her votaries. Virtue retires no more to cottages and cells; but secure of public triumph and applause, she makes the British court her imperial residence.

The goddess all her glorious self appears,
When Carolina's royal form she wears;
With ev'ry conqu'ring charm she stands reveal'd,
While subject-hearts their glad allegiance yield.

Long may this propitious queen be the joy and boast of a great and happy nation! You find I am grown public-spirited. It is you that hath gi-
ven

ven this generous ardour to my soul, and kindled the sincerest zeal for the honour of my king and country. I grow impatient to draw my sword in their defence, and would commence the hero. Nor will I dissemble the truth, but freely own to you, that, in my state of infidelity, my bravery was all affected, and often disguised the most slavish terrors.

I perceive, Madam, it is my own panegyric I am writing rather than yours. Indeed, my character cannot be in better hands. I have certainly done myself justice, and been punctual in the recital of my good qualities; and, with great modesty, have thought fit to propose myself as an example of the reformation of manners.

You will conclude I am in a disposition to write a moral essay, rather than a love-letter; which was really my prime intention; but you have ridiculed all my figures of rhetoric on that subject, so that I am forced to change my style, in my own defence. But I hope I am intelligible, in assuring you I am, without reserve,

Madam,

Your most devoted

and most humble servant,

ALBANUS.



L E T T E R S

T O

C L E O R A.



L E T T E R I.

Madam,

IT is certainly better for yourself, and more for the security of mankind, that you should live in some rural abode, than appear in the world. Such persons as you are fatal to the public tranquillity, and do mischief without ever designing it. But I must own, when belles and beaux retire to country-shades for the sake of heavenly contemplation, the world will be well reformed. A hermit's life might be tolerable, while the serious hours are divided between Hyde-park and the Opera; but a more distant retreat in the full pride of your charms and youth, would be very extraordinary. To be convinced, by so early experience, that mankind are amused only with dreams and fantastic appearances, must proceed from a superior degree of virtue and good sense. After a thousand convictions of the vanity of their pursuits, how few know the emphasis of these few lines!

“ Sweet solitude! when life’s gay hours are past,
“ Howe’er we range, in thee we fix at last;
“ Toss’d thro’ tempestuous seas, (the voyage o’er),
“ Pale we look back, and bliss the friendly shore.

— Our

" Our own strict judges, our past life we scan,
 " And ask, if virtue has enlarg'd the span.
 " If bright the prospect, we the grave defy,
 " Trust future ages, and contented die.

Tickell.

Nothing is, perhaps, more terrible to the imagination than absolute solitude: yet I must own such a retreat as disengages the mind from those interests and passions which mankind generally pursue, appears to me the most certain way to happiness. Quietly to withdraw from the crowd, and leave the gay and ambitious to divide the honours and pleasures of the world, without being a rival or competitor in any of these advantages, must leave a person in perfect and unenvied repose.

Without any apology, I am going to talk to myself; and what follows may be properly called a digression.

Let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting tumults! Ye vain grandeurs of the earth! ye perishing riches, and fantastic pleasures! what are your proudest boasts? Can you yield undecaying delights, joys becoming the dignity of reason, and the capacities of an immortal mind? Ask the happy spirits above, at what price they value their enjoyments? ask them, if the whole creation should purchase one moment's interval of their bliss? No;—one beam of celestial light obscures the glory, and casts a reproach on all the beauty this world can boast.

This is talking in buskins you will think. And, indeed, I may resign crowns and sceptres, and give up the grandeurs of the world, with as much imaginary triumph, as a hero might fight battles, and conquer armies, in a dream.

In the height of this romantic insult, I am,

Madam,

Your most obliged

humble servant.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

Madam,

I Am certainly dead and buried, according to your notions of life; interred in the silence and obscurity of a country-retreat, far from the dear town, and all its joys; which in your gay apprehensions, cannot properly be called living. But for me, (who ask nothing but ease and liberty, in order to be happy), I am willing to inform you, I am in a state of existence, and capable of the entertainment your wit would have given me, if you had been so obliging as to have filled the blank paper you sent. Nothing could be more nicely malicious; nor is it possible for you to imagine how the sight of so much clean paper tormented me. How many sparkling things could you have writ, and not exhausted your stock, nor got the vapours by over-studying yourself! But I hope you will make me some reparation by the length of your next. I will not insist on your writing sense or reason, if that will be any privilege to you. But though nonsense from you would be a great novelty, it would cost you so much pains to write it, that I am afraid you would send me a shorter epistle than your last. I am,

*Madam,**Your most obedient, &c.*

L E T T E R III.

Madam,

I have neglected writing so long, that I am almost ashamed to own I am still alive. I ought to have died in pure civility; which would have been the only sufficient excuse for my silence. But really, Madam, it costs me more pains to indite an epistle to you than it would to write a book to some sort of readers: and I cannot help wishing I had more wit, or you a great deal less.

Your prohibition of Lilliput paper will drive me

to great extremities ; and, what I most fear, will often prove a severe exercise to the patience of my gentle reader. I am reduced to a necessity of talking of this world, or the next. For the *next*, you are so happy at present, that you may not be always disposed to think of so solemn a subject ; and for *this*, I am entirely ignorant. My conversation is confined to whispering trees, and murmuring brooks ; and I cannot give you the least intelligence of what passes among mortals.

My fate, Madam, is just the reverse of yours. You had a great many things in your head, but wanted paper : I have clean paper enough, but nothing at all in my head : it is a *vacuum*, a dismal emptiness ; and unless I fill the blank paper, with the curious flourish of a true lover's knot, I must subscribe,

Madam,

*Your most obliged
humble servant.*

L E T T E R IV.

Madam,

THE sylvan scenes never appeared more beautiful, (not even in Mr Pope's pastorals), than in those soft lines you inclosed. I hope you will find all the joys that peace and innocence can give in your charming retreat. Your description has led my imagination through a thousand enchanting scenes. I wish you may long enjoy those fine walks you are contriving ; not that I wish you may see as many returning springs as the fair damsels before the deluge ; when an insulting beauty might take fifty years deliberation to answer a *billet-doux*, and act the tyrant five hundred years in the full pride of her charms. But you shew no ambition at all of this nature ; and I am persuaded it is no manner of mortification to you, that your conquests are limited to a shorter date.

I am going, Madam, to put you in mind again
that

that you are mortal. I fancy you open my letters with as much gravity as you would a funeral sermon, and read them with the same seriousness. But you seem pleased with these subjects; and, amidst the brightest advantages of youth and fortune, are a reasonable creature, as well as a fine lady. These sort of reflections from me are not the vapours; I am pretty free from the spleen, as you know all half-witted people are. But, in the gayest disposition, Death would have a dismal view, and wear ten thousand horrors, if an immortality beyond it did not brighten the scene.

Without this prospect it would not be worth the while to begin a generous friendship. When we have seen a few more setting suns, (for rising suns some people never see), when a few more flying hours are past, with life to resign the most exalted of human satisfactions, would heighten all the horrors of the grave.

I might, with less trouble, recommend some good book to your perusal, and keep this divinity for my own use. You will be overjoyed that I am come to a conclusion; and am,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Madam,

YOUR reflections on —'s death have something in them so just and agreeable, that I am recompensed for his loss, whatever damage the rest of the world suffers by it.

It pleases me to find you so often returning to a subject that most people take so much pains to avoid. If immortality is the pride and happiness of human nature, why should it not be mentioned with the same gaiety with which we talk of other agreeable things? The other world is at least a greater novelty than this; nor is it such a glorious round of action, to eat, to drink, and sleep, that people should have an aversion to think, if not to try,

try, what variety of enjoyments a future life will give them. But to forget this, is the design of all the thoughtless amusements the wit of man can invent. What Monsieur Pascal says is perfectly just.

*L'origine de toutes les occupations tumultuaires des hommes, et de tout ce qu'on appelle divertissement ou passe-tems, n'est en effet que d'y laisser passer le tems sans le sentir, ou le plutot sans le sentir soi-meme, et d'eviter en perdant cette partie de la vie le degout interieur. L'ame est jettee dans le corps pour y faire un cejour de peu de duree. Elle sait que ce n'est qu'un passage a un voyage eternel, et qu'elle n'a que le peu de tems que dure la vie pour s'y preparer. Mais ce peu l'incommode si fort, et l'embarrasse si etrangement, qu'elle ne songe qu'a le perdre. Ce lui est une peine insupportable a vivre et de penser a soi. Ainsi tout son soin est de s'oublier soi meme, et de laisser couler le tems si court et si precieux sans reflexion, en s'occupant des choses qui l'empechent d'y penser *.*

I will stop here, or you will certainly think I am going to transcribe the whole book, to save you the trouble of throwing away your money on a moral essay : and perhaps, Madam, you may not be in so grave a humour as when you wrote last ; for all human things are changeable, and have sometimes good, and sometimes evil dispositions ; and in what circumstance this will find you, is an uncertainty to,

Madam,

*Your most obedient,
and most humble servant.*

* This is the ground of all the tumultuary business, of all the trifling diversions amongst men ; in which our general aim is, to make the time pass off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourselves, and by getting rid of this small portion of life, to avoid inward disgust. The soul is sent into the body to be the sojourner of a few days. She knows that this is but a stop, till she may embark for eternity ; and that a small space is allowed her to prepare for the voyage : And yet this moment which remains, does so strangely oppress and perplex her, that she only studies how to lose it. She feels an intolerable burden, in being obliged to live with herself, and think of herself ; and therefore her principal care is, to forget herself, and to let this short and precious moment pass away without reflection, by amusing herself with things which prevent the notice of its speed.

Q

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

Madam,

YOU will find, to your grief, I have not hired the carrier to lose the large paper you sent me ; but I have certainly more compassion for you than to fill it. One would think you intended I should write a Western Journal, and give you a full and true relation of all the ghosts and apparitions that are seen in the county of ——— ; for these are the only remarkable events which happen here.

These are the regions of sleep and repose, not of action. For my own part, I neither hope nor fear, contrive nor design any thing, that relates to this mortal life ; but am as much at rest as the people that are sleeping in their sepulchres. I am in some doubt whether I belong to the society of the living or the dead, and am ready to ask myself,

Is this existence real, or a dream ?

I cannot persuade myself to wish you any thing but just what you are, a mere earthly creature. It would be too great a disadvantage to find you in a rank of beings superior to mortals. I am so sensible of the distance at present, that I cannot wish you in a greater elevation. If I asked any thing, perhaps it would be to set you more on an equality, that I might have an opportunity to convince you how sincere and disinterested my friendship is.

By your account, L—— B—— lives a very inactive and inglorious life. Though he has been so long as four months in the world, he has had so few adventures, that I can but just stretch my invention to compose half a song for him.

Thou pretty, smiling, guiltless thing !
 Of thee what can the muses sing ?
 Unless they speak in prophecy,
 How great a hero thou shalt be ;
 Thy country's patron, and the grace
 Of ——'s long illustrious race.

With

With verse and prose, reflections gay and serious, some with a meaning, and others without any meaning at all, I am at last, to your unspeakable satisfaction, come to an end of this fine epistle; and am going to subscribe myself,

Madam, Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

Madam,

YOUR concern for Lerd —, is the most melancholy circumstance in the account you have given me of his death. The toil, the long fatigue is past, and all to come is rest and endless joy. The happy spirit is for ever wandering now,

—Thro' boundless realms of bliss,

Where pleasure blossoms with eternal spring.

You express yourself with so much good sense and true greatness of mind on this occasion, that nothing could set your character in a more agreeable light. The death of your friends seems to reconcile your thoughts to the unknown regions.

With regard to yourself, it might be no disadvantage to quit the world so early. To die in the pride of life, and all the splendour of youthful virtue, has something far more glorious, than to languish out the dregs of life in the exercise of no virtue but patience.

You find, Madam, I am persuading you to die with great composure. I suppose you think yourself obliged to me for resigning my friends to their destiny with so much calmness and submission; but really it is in mere charity to you: for if you grow wise so soon, I cannot imagine how you will fill up the tedious round of three-score years and ten, if Heaven, for the happiness of mankind, should continue your life to that date.

How many people would suspend their part in the joys of paradise, till the heavens are no more, for the most trifling of those amusements which you despise! But while you think so justly of this world, and the next, I must confess, the man-

ner of life to which your quality confines you, excites my compassion. Indeed, you may dispense with me for practising this height of charity, while you are the object of almost every body's envy. But be as happy as the world can make you, it is all but sleeping and dreaming; and as Mr Law says, "being amused with a vain succession of shadows."

This quotation, you may imagine, is to shew my great reading. When I am writing to you, I would indeed shine with every advantage; but the height of my ambition is being,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Madam,

I Find it is generally a very selfish motive that makes me write to you, my design being to extort an answer. If you had but so much disinterested charity, as to write without expecting a reply, I should certainly receive the favour with the utmost gratitude and modesty. However, it is well that you indulge my talent of impertinence, and never strictly insist on common sense.

At present I cannot entertain myself, much less you. The creation seems to want variety; and I am as much inclined to cry for more worlds, as Alexander the Great was; only my uneasiness is for the sake of novelty: for I have little ambition, not enough to leave you in an error, though to my own advantage.

I would not maliciously lessen myself, nor detract from my own good qualities, which certainly appear to my view in their full magnitude; yet such is the force of truth, that I must confess you have given me a sort of imaginary character, and I am an heroine of your own making; as great minds always suppose they find in others the same virtues they really possess themselves.

My letter is of a convenient length; and you will now gladly dismiss

Your most humble servant.

LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.

By another Hand.

L E T T E R I.

I Was so far from thinking your letter the effect of the spleen, that I was persuaded it was written in one of your gayest intervals. To a mind turned like yours, the thoughts of death must be all serene and agreeable. I fancy you will be pleased with these lines, which Monsieur Menard ordered to be written over his closet-door *.

*Las d'esperer & de me plaindre,
De l'amour de grands et du fort ;
C'est ici que j'attends la mort,
Sans la desirer, ou la craindre.*

C'est bien le caractere, le plus beau, & le plus rare qu'on peut avoir : "This character is the best, finest, and "most rare that we can possibly have." But the eternal hurry that attends an exalted station, needs a higher pitch of virtue to keep the mind in a proper temper to meet our dissolution, than is generally attained; and dying in pomp, gives a thousand terrors to the fatal period.

Had I been born some humble villager,
And in a peaceful cottage pass'd my days,
Far from the guilty pageantry of courts,
In innocence my life had calmly pass'd,
And with a smile I might resign my breath.

- * Weary'd with hoping and bewailing,
For love of fortune and the great;
No wish or tear of death prevailing,
Its coming patiently I wait.

The

The world has, I think, as few charms for me, as for most people of my age ; but I must own, I feel a sort of reluctance to part with every thing below, and a dread to enter on those unknown regions, from whence none return to tell us what they find.

Betwixt the whistling of the wind, and the roaring of a fall of water, I have at present a solemn and agreeable concert ; and cannot help addressing myself with Mira to the winter.

“ To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
 “ Thy sigh my sister, and the tear my friend ;
 “ On thee I muse, and in thy hast’ning sun
 “ See life expiring, ere ’tis well begun ;
 “ Thy sick’ning ray, and venerable gloom,
 “ Shew life’s last scene, the solitary tomb.”

Adieu.

CLEORA.

L E T T E R II.

WHither shall I direct for you ? Are you still an inhabitant of the earth, or ascended to the ethereal regions ? Am I addressing a mortal, or an immortal spirit ? In what language must I speak ? If you are still in this world, I am determined to molest you ; and I hope this letter will find you in the midst of some agreeable reverie, and chase the gaudy vision from your fancy.

I cannot praise your virtue in becoming a recluse, and getting the victory by a cowardly flight. I would have you raise your character, by venturing into this wicked town, and by despising the world in the midst of its dazzling temptations.

To read a treatise of devotion instead of a new play, and preserve your serious temper, surrounded with vanity and diversions, would be a more heroical part, than enjoying an inglorious tranquillity among purling streams, and flowery meadows.

Besides,

Besides, here would be the addition of mortification to heighten your virtue : for you would scarce find the crying of *small-coal* as harmonious a sound, as the warbling of nightingales ; nor the smell of *sea-coal* smoke, as fragrant as the breath of opening violets and primroses.

But my comparisons are so much to the advantage of the country, that I am afraid you will suspect my advice to be the effect of envy : and I had as good throw off a disguise, and own, that at present my way of living is a series of impertinence ; and were it to continue,

Far rather would I in some humble cell,
Distant from all that's gay, for ever dwell,
Than waste my flying hours, and thus divide
My time, 'twixt folly, calumny, and pride :
Still trifling, thus debase the gift of sense,
And live the slave of dull impertinence.

I have not yet had the curiosity to see the new opera. The weather is so hot, that I think shady groves and crystal streams more refreshing than a crowded theatre. Indeed the town was never more disagreeable to me than now. I wish I knew whether it proceeds from being more wise, or more dull ; I am afraid of the latter : for as to an increase of wisdom, I cannot say I am sensible of it in any other instance.

The greatest happiness, perhaps, that can be attained in this world, is only insipid indolence, and not any real pleasure. How different does it prove from those gay visions that youth forms to itself, when it first launches out into the flattering ocean ! How soon do tempests of trouble and confusion rise, while nothing is so common as the desire of long life ; and yet how small a part of mankind would care to trace back their lives again in the same steps they did before ! though, perhaps, the only variety would be, to change once folly for another, to quit the playhouse for *Ombre*, or the gentle strains of the opera for the serious contemplation

contemplation of their own dear persons in a looking-glass.

I am yours, &c.

CLEORA.

L E T T E R III.

I Beg you not to write any more on *Lilliput* paper. I am almost afraid to open your letter, for fear of finding, after a respectful margin, *Madam* at the top, and your name at the bottom, and trackless wastes of blank paper between, for me to fill up at my leisure.

You will be surpris'd to find, that at a time when my health is declining, I should be planting trees, and laying out walks, as if I thought I had two or three hundred years to enjoy them. I need not assure you I have no such expectations; but it gives me an innocent delight to form these sylvan scenes in an irregular manner, and with a secret art to imitate nature in her negligent appearance.

I have no giants in yew; nor tygers or birds in holly; but instead of them, firs and pines, that grow just as nature designed them; and so intermixed with woodbines, syringas, and other flowery shrubs, that in a few months they will be a perfect wilderness of sweets.

The satisfaction I take in this undertaking, makes me often fancy I am not sincere in my thoughts of soon leaving it. I am as busy in my garden, and as much surfeited with the *grand monde* as ever Dioclesian was.

Sento qualche stupidità che me impedisce di goddere una vita nella corte piena di splendore e cerimonia tanto, che quella chi si trova nella campagna senza gloria et senza turbenza.*

Every plant that flourishes gives me a pleasure,

* I feel within me a kind of stupidity, which hinders me to enjoy that happiness at a court taken up with splendour and ceremony, that I relish in a country-life free from pomp and hurry.

and

and every drooping tree infects me with languishing. I watch every decay among my flowers, as a celebrated beauty would do grey hairs or wrinkles.

I have two or three sheep that perplex me as much as le Berger Extravagant's flock did him: and were I to indulge my rural delights, and return no more to the noisy town, I should fall into the most soothing and agreeable madness imaginable.

Come, Amaryllis, come, and with me share,
The blooming woodbines, and the fragrant air;
Together o'er the flow'ry walks we'll rove,
Or sit beneath the shelter of the grove:
While flocks upon the hills around us bleat,
And echoes to the streams their voice repeat.
Among the willows in a gloomy shade,
By nature form'd, there rushes a cascade;
Upon its banks you undisturb'd may lie,
While contemplation wafts you to the sky.

CLEORA.

LETTER IV.

PEOPLE seem at present more busily employed in preparing for the King's birth-day, than for their own last; and appear to be in greater anxiety for a seat in the dancing-room, than for a seat in paradise.

I was last night with ——. A barge of music followed us. But in the midst of this gaiety, your letter was not the only thing that put me in mind of mortality. I had such a violent pain in my head, that neither the wit of the company, the softness of the music, nor the beauty of the evening, could give me any sincere delight.—If pleasure be the lot of man, it must be in something beyond the grave; for, on this side, constant experience tells us, all is vanity.

But this confession has hardly any influence on human conduct: for people in a high rank must often act against their reason, to avoid being
R thought

thought unfashionable; and, for fear of being thought mad by the modish world, must act in a manner which they are sensible is being truly so, to keep in vogue with their polite contemporaries.

I cannot forbear thinking with myself, that if a being endued with reason, and a capacity of judging, (an inhabitant of another planet, and an utter stranger to our nature), could take a view of our actions, he would be at a loss what to imagine we were; and had he no informer, but were to judge by our conduct, he would certainly either imagine that we were a species who were insured always to live in the world we now inhabit; or else, that after enjoying ourselves here as long as we could, we were to be insensible for ever, without the least expectation of a future judgment, punishment, or reward.

You would hardly make an apology for desiring me to write to you, if you knew how much pleasure the injunction gives to,

Yours unalterably,

CLEORA.

L E T T E R V.

THE news of my Lord —'s death has been so great a shock to me, that I want all your arguments against long life, to reconcile me to the shortness of his, at the latter end of seventy years. I have much ado to think that he did not die too young, since he had strength enough to endure the most exquisite torments. I loved him most sincerely as a relation, and esteemed him as a most valuable and faithful friend. My thoughts are continually employed about him; and I grieve for my own loss, and rejoice at his gain in the same moment; and cannot forbear following him with my speculations to the mansions of eternal peace, and enquiring, with Mr Tickell, in his verses on the death of Mr Addison,

“ In

" In what new region to the just assign'd ?
 " What new employments please th' unbodiy'd
 " mind ?
 " A winged virtue, through the ethereal sky,
 " From world to world unweary'd does he fly ?
 " Or curious trace the long laborious maze
 " Of Heaven's decrees, where wond'ring angels
 " gaze ?
 " Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell
 " How Michael battled, and the dragon fell ?
 " Or, mix'd with milder cherubim, to glow
 " In hymns of love ?"—

I cannot help fancying, how his soul is charmed to find itself at liberty, and no longer chained to an infirm body, which continually clogged it in all its operations. How is he transported to be admitted to the presence of God his Saviour ! And with what delight (if we may be allowed to conjecture that he remembers her) will he see his wife, for whom he has shed so many tears, in all the pomp of celestial glory ! With what pleasure will he gaze upon the skies, while they unfold their sparkling treasures ! and with what joy and wonder observe the planets in their courses, and look into all the deep philosophy of heaven ! With what attention listen to the songs of angels, while they tune their golden lyres to the praise of God and of the Lamb ! And how will his heart overflow with gratitude to his Saviour, while he reflects on what he suffered to purchase these pleasures for him !

When I consider the advantages of his change, I blame my grief : and yet who can forbear to lament the loss of friends, the honestest of men, and the most agreeable companion that ever was ; especially in an age like this, where so little honour, friendship, and sincerity, are to be found ? But I am not going to write a satyr upon mankind, and therefore will say no more, but that

I am faithfully yours,

CLEORA.

L E T T E R VI.

To Clorinda.

YOU ask me, my dear Clorinda, what is the reason of the deep melancholy you observe in me? and are amazed to see how little relish I have for the things which amuse other people of my age and quality. Your partiality for me makes you fancy that my indifference is the result of a good understanding; and that the force of my judgment has been able to subdue my passions. But, alas! how are you mistaken! My melancholy proceeds from the irregularity of my affections: love, vanity, distrust, and repentance, conspire to rack me; and,

When I look back on all my former days,
 The only comfort the review affords,
 Is, that they're past.——
 For through their course I cannot recollect
 One free from sorrow, guilt, or disappointment:
 Yet heedless still through the same paths I stray,
 And rashly venture on the dang'rous road;
 With open eyes, like one asleep, I walk,
 And drink the cup, although I know 'tis poison'd.
 Why am I led thus captive by my will,
 While reason, faithful guide, for ever warns
 My drowsy soul to shun impending danger?
 This night may be my last; I ne'er again
 May see the dawning of another morn:
 Shall I forego the joys of heav'n, to soothe
 A wayward fancy, or destructive passion?
 Ah, no! let ev'ry faculty unite
 To break the yoke! reason, resume thy sway,
 And calm these wild disorders of my breast!
 Whisper thy sacred dictates to my heart,
 And bend it to th' observance of thy laws!
 Inspire my soul with ev'ry heav'nly thought,
 And shew me wisdom's paths! direct my steps,
 Nor leave me thus benighted!

There is not in nature a greater contradiction
 than

than my thoughts and actions; and it is impossible for me to account why they are so. I pursue the pleasures of the world, at the same time that I know them to be fleeting and worthless. I distract myself about the opinion of the public, though I despise the injustice of its censures. I cannot forbear repining at my unhappy circumstances, in suffering myself to be tormented with the ingratitude of some whom I thought my friends; nor weeping while I indulge a hopeless passion; though I know that

Quickly will my glass of life be run,
And with it all my joys and sorrows gone.
Then I no more shall feel Love's cruel fire,
But cold and peaceful to the grave retire;
No more shall weep for the licentious wrongs
Of judgments rash, or scourge of slanderous
tongues.

And yet not even this reflection can arm me with patience. I am uneasy with my faults, without correcting them; and in love with my duty without practising it. I act contrary to my highest reason, and turn rebel to the authority of my own judgment.

After this account of me, you will not wonder that I retire as much as I can from noise and hurry; though no shade is gloomy enough to hide my folly from my eyes, nor any retreat calm enough to lull my passions. However, I do not yet despair of conquering these vexations, by the assistance of religion, and the grace of that God, who will always be found by those who seek him, in an humble sense of their own unworthiness, and a firm reliance upon his mercy.

I am never in so whimsical a situation of mind, in the midst of all my absurdities, as to forget that I am, by a thousand obligations,

*Your faithful friend,
and obliged servant,*

IRIS.

LETTER

L E T T E R VII.

*To Almira.**My dear Almira,*

YOU will be extremely afflicted, though not surprised, to hear, that, after languishing so many months, the unhappy Teraminta yesterday expired in my arms. The day before her death, she ordered every body but me to leave the room; and desired me to sit down by her bed-side. Then, taking me by the hand, she spoke to me in the following manner.

I see my faithful Emilia, that you are sinking under the affliction which you suffer, to find, that a few hours will deprive you, not only of a sincere and tender friend, but of a person whom your partiality inclines you to believe has some merit. I cannot leave you under this mistake; and go out of the world with the guilt of deceiving you. It is not possible for me to let you waste your tears for a wretch who is unworthy of them. Yet let what I have suffered for my crimes, induce you to compassion, and my hard fate warn you to guard against the first glimmerings of a guilty passion: for that has been my ruin. You know I was married extremely young, and upon the fashionable unhappy views of estate and titles. However, my husband's merit, (which, to my eternal confusion, I must ever acknowledge), joined to his fondness for me, gained so far upon my heart, that, if I had not all the passion that attends love, I had all the tenderness of an exalted friendship for him. In this calm state I passed the first six years of our marriage; and had several children by him. But then his public employment obliged him to inquire for a person to assist him in the discharge of his office. He had a young man recommended to him for that purpose; whom he took into his house. He had ten thousand good qualities. He was just three and twenty, and perfectly beautiful; at least, to me he appeared so. But why should I describe him to you, or strive
to

to conceal the temptation, while I own the guilt? You know the destroyer of my peace and his own. It is the wretched Alonzo. He had not been long in the family before I began to have an affection for him, that frightened me. His name affected me. I could not hear him mentioned, without trembling; or see him unexpectedly, without becoming as pale as ashes; and, in a few months, I found my heart was entirely given up to him. What eloquence can express my grief at this discovery! My vows, my husband's merit, my family, my fame, now appeared to me in their full force, and joined to rack me. I passed my nights in tears; and rose more weary than I lay down. I flew to religious books for succour, but in vain; I had neglected the danger till it was irretrievable. I wandered in my house and gardens more like a guilty ghost than a living creature. And to add to my distress, I observed an unusual melancholy in the face of my dear Alonzo. He was always in my way, alone and pensive. One evening, as I was standing, just without the door, in the court before my house, observing the moon and stars, which were shining in their full splendour, and wishing myself above those glittering luminaries, that I might be no longer subject to that criminal passion which rendered my life a burden, I chanced to put my hands behind me. I had not stood long in that posture, before I thought I felt something gently touch my hand; and, looking round, I found it to be Alonzo; who, seeing me about to leave him, took one of my hands, and holding it betwixt his, pressed it to his bosom, with an air of tenderness which pierced my very soul. However, I was enough mistress of myself to ask him, what behaviour of mine had encouraged him to hope, that I would endure so unaccountable an insolence? He told me, that what he did was not the effect of hope, but of absolute despair; that his misery was grown to such an height, that it was incapable of receiving any aggravation; and that though he loved me to distraction, he did not even entertain

entertain a wish, that I should return a passion so much below me; and that if I could forgive the frenzy that had brought him to make this declaration, he would for the future observe an eternal silence. At these words he burst into tears; and I left him with the utmost precipitation, to conceal a tenderness, which neither the obligations of my duty, or any other reflection, were strong enough to suppress. I was now sunk to the depth of misery. I had listened to the declaration of a love forbidden by all the laws of Heaven and earth, and contrary to every principle of virtue, which my education had instilled into my soul. I knew not what method to take to free myself and Alonzo from so unhappy a situation. Sometimes I resolved to feign some cause of dislike, and prevail with my husband to discharge him. When I had summoned all my aids of virtue, modesty, and pride, and fancied myself able to make the dreadful proposal, my passion brought back his idea to my heart, with all the charms of his mind and person, and represented him not only ruined in his peace, but in his fortune, by my severity. Several months passed in this state of anxiety, and he religiously observed his word, nor ever once mentioned his passion; but at last the disorder of his mind threw him into a fever, and his life was despaired of. Judge what I endured upon this occasion. However, conscious modesty hindered me from going near him in his illness, which lasted almost a fortnight. But at last his youth, and the strength of his constitution, overcame his disease, and he was able to get up the stairs that led to my apartment, and was at the door of it just as I went to call some of the servants. At that moment every good angel left me, and I could not forbear expressing my joy to find him able to leave his bed. "Alas!" said he, "why do you wish my misery prolonged? Death is my only road to peace, since I am hated by you." These words, joined with the paleness of his looks, disarmed all my resolutions; and I told him a secret which I ought rather to have

have died than have uttered. I owned my passion, and begged him to live for my sake, if not for his own. He was amazed and overjoyed at this confession, and soon recovered his health. We now went on in a thoughtless road of pleasure, and indulged our mutual passion, till at last he pressed me to give him the most guilty proofs of it; and strengthened his intreaties with all the arguments that so good an understanding, assisted by the powers of hell, could inspire. But as passionately as I loved him, he could not, with all his eloquence, erase the sentiments of innate virtue, and convictions of religion, from my soul. I was not enough abandoned, but to look on adultery as a point of horror not to be outlived: and though I allowed him liberties, which I am now convinced were guilty, yet I always kept myself from the last steps of vice; and was so happy, that instead of my yielding to his arguments, he was convinced by mine, and asked pardon of God and me for the criminal design he had pursued. We now resolved, by the strictness of our lives, to make what amends we could for the errors we had fallen into; and for these last three years have applied ourselves seriously to the securing of our salvation. But we have never been able to conquer our unhappy passion, though we have suppressed the effects of it. It is this eternal contradiction, joined to the remorse I feel for my ingratitude to the best of husbands, which has brought me into the condition you see. Happy, if, by losing my life, I could atone for my injustice! How gentle would my agonies appear, if, by their excess, I could hope, that they would be accepted as part of my punishment! Whatever I could suffer here would be joyful to me, were I sure it could entitle me to mercy hereafter. Here she fell into a swoon; but quickly revived, and lived till next day. About an hour before she died, she sent for her husband and children, and took leave of them with great tenderness; and then lying down as if she would sleep, expired in a few minutes. They are in vast

affliction for her. But no words can paint the despair of Alonzo. He has neither spoke nor ate since her death; and seems so perfectly stupified, that I fear his senses are gone for ever.

Adieu, my dear Almira! my tears flow so fast, that I can write no more.

ÆMILIA.

L E T T E R VIII.

By the same hand.

My Lord,

I Have at last taken the only means left me, to free myself from your importunities, and the weakness of my own heart, which argued but too much on your side. I found my fame, and every other consideration, too light, when weighed in the balance against your love: but the force of religion has turned the scale, and made me resolve to spend the remainder of my weeping days in a convent. It is in that holy retreat that I hope to find the peace which I lost in the world. You cannot be sorry for this resolution, when you consider of it. For not all the polite maxims of the present age are sufficient to discountenance virtue, or bring vice into reputation; or could they prevail in this world, would they be admitted at God's tribunal. Your Lordship may call this bigotry, or any other name, which the levity of your fancy, or modish principles, can inspire you with; but a day will come, in which you will find it sacred truth; and you will be glad, that, by shutting myself for ever from your sight, I hindered you from the guilt you have pursued, and put it out of your power to ruin me. It would be no very pleasing reflection on your death-bed, that you had seduced a soul from the paths of peace and virtue; and, to give yourself a fashionable liberty, had entailed misery and infamy on a family who have served you with zeal and affection. What has my aged father left undone to support your interest in the country? With what tenderness did my mother educate

educate your two young sisters, who were committed to her care? And, in return, you would bring their only daughter to the last degree of sin and shame. This may be genteel, but surely it is not noble. How false are your sentiments of honour and justice! You thought it would be a reflection on your character, to marry into a family so much below you in birth and fortune; but are not ashamed to return a thousand obligations (pardon me, my Lord; for great as you are, I must call them such) with the highest injury. And though you have not succeeded in your guilt as to that, you robbed two ancient servants, nay, friends of yours, of the joy of their eyes, and delight of their age, their only child; who, by your licentious love, is forced to seclude herself from them, and the whole world, for ever. I dread to think how they will support this affliction. I left a letter on the table to acquaint my mother with my retreat; but concealed the cause, for your sister's sake; since she might perhaps resolve to discharge herself from an office which she has executed with so much care, and has produced her so cruel a requital. Let the sorrow you brought upon my parents content you, and do not carry ruin into another family. Why should you employ the finest understanding, and the most graceful person, to promote the cause of hell? And why must the rank, power, and wealth, which were given you to diffuse happiness all around you, only serve to make you capable of splendid mischief?

I am now in a sanctuary, where I cannot be the entertainment of your idle hours; and where the time I spent in listening to you, shall now be employed in praying for your reformation. The tears which I have often poured out in vain, to dissuade you from your guilty enterprise, shall be shed before God for your sins. For though you have used me with the utmost cruelty, your eternal welfare will always be the tenderest concern of

The unhappy

ANASTASIA.

LETTER IX.

To Leonora.

I Have been on the very borders of the grave, and have for several months endured all the pains and languishments of a dangerous illness. But it has pleased God to restore me to so tolerable a measure of health, that I am now able to think and write again. And with what pleasure do I feel myself once more at ease!

How ungrateful are the generality of mankind while they enjoy this blessing! and how seldom (when they are well) do they reflect on the inconvenience and faintness, the weariness and pains which attend a sickbed? I never was sensible what I owed to God for my health, till I came to want it. While my blood flowed with an even uninterrupted course in its channels, and my arteries and sinews were able to perform their several functions, I overlooked that mercy which had contrived them for those operations. But as soon as they were obstructed, I was sensible of their value. And while I sickened at the sight of my food, I envied the peasant, whose health enabled him to earn his dinner with the sweat of his brow; and while I was in torment in a stately apartment, and restless on a bed of down, how joyfully would I have exchanged conditions with the hind, who, in an humble cottage, was sleeping on sheaves of straw! How readily would I have parted with all the vanity of airy titles, all the advantages of riches and grandeur, to purchase health! health which gives relish to every enjoyment, and, like the rays of light, diffuses beauty upon every object! When I was ill, the beauty of the creation was effaced to me: I found no longer harmony in the sounds of music, nor joy while the sun poured his meridian glory; but turned my eyes from the intolerable lustre, and wished for the shades of night to veil his radiance. I had no pleasure in seeing every thing round me flourish, while I withered.

thered and decayed. The birds that warbled near my window, seemed to sing my funeral dirge; and every fly that buzzed in my chamber, sounded like an alarm to judgment. When night came, I considered that probably I might never see daylight again, till the morning of the resurrection dawned upon the earth. And when I was drowsy, and inclined to sleep, I imagined that I should perhaps never wake, till I heard the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the last trumpet; nor lift up my head, till I saw the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory. This near prospect of death and judgment has put the world, and all its gaudy vanities, into a just light, and has convinced me of the falsity of human comforts. And I have reason to bless God, who has given me such an opportunity of seeing things as they really are; and, by making me sensible of the small consolation that all the earth can afford in the time of illness, and at the hour of death, has directed my eyes and hopes to heaven, and made me know the value of those hours which were too often wasted in guilt or folly. And believe me, Leonora, you will some time or other be sensible of this important truth. You are not more secure of years to come, than I appeared to be before this illness; and will find the splendour of a court, and all the flatteries of life, miserable comforters upon a sickbed. The pleasures of this world will withdraw, and nothing remain with you but a sense of your past conduct; and when you find yourself ready to quit the stage, you will have no concern about any thing, but how you have acted your part.

I am still very weak, though perfectly at ease; and I could be satisfied to remain so always, rather than hazard being again a slave to my passions and pleasures. I am, with all imaginable sincerity,

Your most faithful

DIANA.

LETTER

L E T T E R X.

To Lyfander.

I Told you, some time since, that my affairs would oblige me to pass this summer at my estate in the west. I have been at it these six weeks. I brought no company hither but Cleomedon; who is so fond of his studies, that I seldom see him, unless it be at meals; but then he is always sprightly and cheerful. And, at other times I entertain myself either in the park or gardens; which afford me so much amusement that I never find the day too long.

I cannot forbear repeating to you an adventure which I met with a few days ago. — As I was riding over some of my farms, I came to the brow of an extreme high hill, from whence I had the prospect of the most beautiful valley imaginable. It was full of woods, and watered with a large river: in some places it run very broad and straight, in others it was more contracted, and flowed in a thousand windings; sometimes it was lost among the woods, and rose again with fresh beauty as it run through the flowery lawns. I was so charmed with the sight of this sylvan scene, that I longed to be in it. But the difficulty was how to get down the hill; for that side next the valley was almost perpendicular, and so rocky, and covered with wood, that it seemed unpassable. However, I dismounted; and, leading my horse, found a narrow winding, by which I made a shift to get to the bottom of the hill; at the foot of which was a delightful plain, here and there interspersed with spreading oaks, beech, and sycamore trees. Here I had the pleasure to observe the spring of the river that watered that beautiful valley. It gushes out of the side of the rock; and, after falling from one cleft to another, a great height, runs even with the grass through the plains and woods. I now got on horseback again; and, following the course of the river about three or four furlongs, I
came

came to a low house, behind which there was a plot of trees, and before a little court, which had no other fence than a laurel-hedge, breast-high. There was a little wicket which stood open, and the neatness of the place tempted me to go in; which I did, with the better assurance, because I imagined, by the appearance and size of the house, that it was not inhabited by any persons of distinction. I crossed the court without seeing any body; and came into a hall, the neatness of which is not to be described. But I own I was surprised to see a harpsichord, upon which lay some music-books. I had the curiosity to look into them; and found some of them were opera-airs, but the greater part hymns and anthems. There lay on the table two large folios of maps, and upon the ground I observed a pair of very fine globes. A furniture so different from what I expected, made me uncertain whether I should follow my curiosity, which led me to go up a stair-case that was at one end of the hall; or go back without disturbing the owners of the house, who I now began to believe were of a different rank from what I at first imagined; and yet it was inconceivable to me how any persons of distinction should be in such a house. My curiosity at last prevailed, and I went up. But when I came near the top of the stairs, I heard a person reading with great justness, in a clear voice, which seemed to be a woman's. I stopped a little to listen to her; and at last, turning on my right hand, I observed a door which stood half open, from whence I imagined the voice came. I drew near it without any noise, and could see a grave well-looking woman of about fifty, who was reading aloud to two very beautiful young ones, who were at work, embroidering flowers on white silk. They were dressed alike in white satin waist-coats, and brown lute string petticoats; and upon their heads fine laced caps, made like those of the common peasants. They had an air of innocence and modesty greater than I ever saw. She who appeared the elder of the two had dark hair, and the

the most blooming complexion imaginable. She was tall, and finely shap'd; and might have pass'd for an inimitable beauty, had not the young creature who sat by her shew'd that it was possible even to surpass her. Her hair was almost flaxen, and her skin could scarce be equalled by any poetical simile; she had large blue eyes, and her eyebrows and eye-lashes were a dark brown; she had a sweetness in her countenance which would have disarm'd a tyger of its rage. I had consider'd them but a few moments, when she, who seem'd the elder of the two young women, look'd up, and seem'd surpris'd at the sight of a stranger. However, she rose with great civility, and said, "Madam, here is a gentleman, who, I believe, would speak with you." I then was so confounded, that I neither knew how to retire, or make an excuse for so unaccountable a visit. But the eldest of the ladies ask'd me to come in, with so benign and cheerful an aspect, that it gave me courage to own the occasion of my intrusion, and ask a thousand pardons for it. To which she answer'd, "That my curiosity was its own punishment, since it had made me take so much pains to see what was so little worth it, as her retirement." I had now time to view the room they were in. It was hung, to the top of the chairs, with fine Indian matting; above which, all round the room, were shelves fill'd with books; and, upon looking into them, I found them to be an admirable collection of history, divinity, and travels. There were a few books of the best philosophy, and some plays. There were upon stands several basins of flowers; and, in short, every thing was so elegant and charming, that I began to fancy myself in an enchanted habitation, and could not forbear expressing my desire to know how people of so extraordinary a genius came to live in so very retired a manner? Which the elderly lady perceiving, told me, that if I had patience, she would give me a faithful account of it. She said her husband was the heir of a noble family; that his name was

Theanor,

Theanor, by whom she had two daughters, which were the young women I saw; that her husband died when the eldest was betwixt eight and nine years old, and left great debts. In vain did she apply to his rich relations; they would not assist her: so that she found herself either obliged to alter her way of living, or leave his debts unpaid; which, though the laws did not force her to satisfy, she thought herself bound to do by all the rules of justice and honour. She therefore discharged all her servants except two maids, and an ancient clergyman, whom she kept to instruct her daughters. With this small family she retired to this house, where she said she had lived upwards of fifteen years. She paid her husband's debts in the first seven; but had found so much peace in that solitude, that she was loath to quit it, and had the pleasure to find both her daughters in the same mind. I could not forbear asking how they amused themselves in so absolute a retreat, and in what manner they divided the day? In answer to which she told me, that indeed they seldom went abroad; and that when she had given me an account of one day, she told me their whole course of life for the last fifteen years.

“As soon as we rise,” said she, “we meet in a little chapel below stairs, where the clergyman I mentioned to you, reads prayers to us, and we sing a psalm. After this, we have our breakfast; and my daughters amuse themselves with their music or painting, as they like best, while I am busied with the affairs of my family. About eleven o'clock we go into a room, where we prepare medicines for the poor, who cannot afford better help, and there have a press filled with cloaths for them of all sorts: and in the drawers under are Bibles, and other books of devotion; that while we take care of their bodies, their souls may not be entirely neglected. Here we spend our time, till we are ready to dress for dinner. After dinner my daughters play on the harpsichord, and sing, or sometimes

“ we only converse till we have a-mind to come
“ up hither, where one of us constantly reads,
“ while the others work. In the evening we walk
“ till supper; after which we call our little fami-
“ ly, and end the day, as we begun it, in praising
“ God, and imploring his protection.”

I told her, “ I was no longer surpris’d that they
“ liked their way of living, since it appeared to
“ me to be such as must entirely secure them from
“ all kinds of discontent.”

They none of them answered to this; and, upon
looking up, I saw the face of the eldest daughter
covered with tears. I expressed my concern at this
sudden alteration, and begged to know the occa-
sion of it. “ Alas!” said her mother, “ this un-
“ happy girl is more to be pitied than you ima-
“ gine; and it is only on her account that I feel
“ sorrow. About five years ago she fell desperate-
“ ly in love with a young man, who was equally
“ so with her. But the misfortune was, that he
“ was not only much below her in his fortune,
“ but of a family which are notorious for their
“ wickedness; though he is not so himself; for
“ his mother, who was perfectly virtuous, had in-
“ stilled into him all the principles of piety and
“ morality. They had long had a mutual tender-
“ ness before I perceived it; but when I did, and
“ found how much Rosella’s heart was fixed, it
“ afflicted me so, that I fell into a deep melancholy,
“ which ended in a dangerous sickness, and I was
“ given over by my physicians. I then told Ro-
“ sella the cause of my illness, and advised her
“ against a marriage, the apprehensions of which
“ had, in all probability, cost me my life. She
“ fell on her knees by my bed-side, and, bathing
“ my hands with her tears, begged I would endea-
“ vour to recover; for if somebody was to be the
“ victim of her unhappy passion, she was resolved
“ it should be herself, since death would be less
“ terrible to her than offending me. I rejoiced,
“ and was surpris’d at her compliance, and hoped
“ her affections had not been so firmly rooted as I
“ since

“ since found. When I began to recover, she begged leave to write to Alphonso, (for that was the name of her lover), and give him an account of the promise she had made, and the reasons which forced her to it. He received the news with inexpressible grief, and the next day left his father’s house; to which he has never yet returned, nor has any body heard of him. I have been so much touched with my daughter’s sufferings, and the patience with which she endured them, without ever upbraiding me as the cause of them, that I now wish as ardently as she does, to see him return; that I may have the pleasure of rewarding her filial piety, by giving her hand where she long ago placed her heart.” She could not end this relation without tears, in which her daughters accompanied her.

I own I was moved with compassion at the story of Rosella; and cannot take my thoughts from the charming retirement, or forget the beauty of Melissa, which was the name of the younger daughter.

I staid till it was dark, and then took my leave, extremely delighted with so uncommon an adventure. Adieu.

BELLAMOUR.

[See the continuation of her story in letter 12. part II.]

for me, put me on the desperate adventure of privately quitting his family, and securing my freedom in some humble disguise. No person on earth was privy to my design, but a near relation of my mother's; a person of strict honour and piety, who encouraged me to sacrifice every thing, rather than renounce my faith, or break my peace with Heaven and my own conscience.

I got the habit of a country-girl; and, with this gentleman's assistance, was carried into one of the most fertile counties in England, till we came near a large farm-house, of which he had some knowledge, and there he left me to make my own fortune. I went on with cautious steps, till I came to the entrance of a square court, surrounded with a hedge of hawthorn in its full bloom. Here I met the mistress of the family. She appeared young, and, in a clean modest dress, was perfectly agreeable. There was something in her aspect so gentle and beneficent, that I could not help being interested in her welfare, from the first moment I saw her.

She was then dealing out the remains of a plentiful table, to a company of indigent people; who, with lifted hands and grateful hearts, implored Heaven to reward her, in a thousand blessings. A very pretty boy and girl, with sparkling eyes, and rosy cheeks, stood hanging on her apron; who, to mimic their mother, gave away all the little treasure they had in their pockets to the beggars children; and then fell a-crying, because she would not suffer them to pull off their own shoes and stockings, to give to some that were bare-footed.

As soon as she had dismissed her dependents, I offered my service, and told her the distresses to which I must be exposed, if she refused me. She perceived my concern was unaffected; and seeing me young, with the bloom of health in my looks, (without any of that impertinent caution I expected), she agreed to receive me into her service. She then happened to want a servant, rather
to

to share with her in the management of a large family, than to be employed in any domestic drudgery. I know not why, but she seemed pleased with me; and I, with equal content, entered my new station, without any melancholy reviews of my past grandeur, the dignity of my birth, or the delicacy of my education. The glorious motive for which I had resigned the splendid vanities of life, gave an unspeakable alacrity to my mind, and filled it with that ineffable peace that springs from conscious virtue.

Be these celestial consolations mine,
And I the world, with all its pomp, resign.

I did not see my new master till the evening; when he came home, with a train, not of beaux and powdered footmen, but of industrious honest labourers; some of his own household, and others hired by the day, whom he punctually paid at the close of it, repeating that rule of the sacred scripture, *Thou shalt not sleep with the wages of an hireling*. He is a very grave man, twice the age of his wife; a person of great prudence and unblemished honesty; very hospitable to strangers, as gentle and compassionate to his servants. Country-business is his great delight, in the management of which Heaven has blessed him with uninterrupted prosperity, and vast increase.

The farm-house is indeed somewhat antique, but spacious and pleasant. A more agreeable situation cannot be imagined, nor a greater variety of sylvan scenes described in poetry, unless Mr Thomson's Spring and Summer Seasons could rise in one enchanting prospect. The wide landskip round is all my master's property; his snowy flocks are ranging on the hills, his grazing herds lowing through the plains: the mountains are crowned with the great Creator's bounty, and the valleys made vocal with his praises.

These scenes of innocence and plenty bring back the patriarchal ages to my view, and give me a sort of pious pleasure. Methinks I see the plains
of

of Mamre, covered with the wealthy Hebrews flocks and herds; or, shifting the scene for the fruitful fields of Haran, the beauteous Rachel following her fleecy charge, seems to come in view. Boaz and his reapers appeared to my fancy, in the jovial month of harvest. In that chearful season, here was no wild riot, no rude intemperance; nothing but harmless merriment appeared among any of my master's domestics. As soon as they enter his service, he gives them a Bible, and the Practice of Piety; with strict orders, that they appear constantly on the Lord's day at the public worship, unless they have such an excuse as they dare carry to the last tribunal.

It will not be incredible to one of your piety, that I can make myself easy in a way of life so different from the gaieties of a court, to which I have been inured. I am not only easy, but really happy. My mistress, who has a sweetness of temper not to be equalled, is fond of me; and leaves me, not to be idle, but, which is much better, to chuse my own employment. You know my stature is above the common height: and since I came here, I am rather grown taller, and somewhat more plump; so that a little business does me no manner of harm.

I have entirely put off the fine lady, and all my court-airs. I have almost forgot I am an earl's daughter; and should start at the sound of Lady Frances. Instead of that, I am plain Rosalinda, without any other appellation, but what the gentle swains now and then give me, of a handsome lass, or a proper damsel; with which I am infinitely better pleased, than when I was an angel, or a goddess, and impiously addressed in the strains of adoration. If ever I return to the modish world, I must learn to dance again, having perfectly forgot to make my honours. I have made but one courtesy since I came here, and that was to a squire; who, because it was something low, and not finished in the twinkling of an eye, caught
me

me by the hand, verily believing I was sinking to the ground in a fainting fit. I am not turned Quaker; but I have laid aside all ceremony, and call every body in the village by their Christian names, except my master and mistress, and the parson of the parish; whom I cannot pass by without telling you, he is a man of exemplary piety, of universal charity, and a great blessing to this place.

My splendid distinction of being the head-servant, as it gives me a pretence to keep my distance, and to be as reserved as I think fit; so it frees me from any drudgery but what is my own choice; the worst of which is, rubbing a long oaken table, that graces the hall, and is kept as bright as a looking-glass. My Saturday's work is dressing four or five spacious chimnies with pionies, hollyoaks, or branches of bays. Some part of my time (and that the most delightful) is spent in rambling the fields with my master's children; the pretty boy and girl I mentioned. While they are following their little sports, I give up my thoughts to some innocent reverie, or pious meditation: to this the view of the fair creation invites me. Here the present Deity seems to challenge a natural homage, while he cheers me in the glory of the sun, refreshes me in the fragrant breeze, is beauty in the flowers of the field, and harmony in the nightingale's voice. With a sort of ecstasy I repeated Milton's morning-hymn, to which the Italian translation gives new life and music.

*Gloriose opre tue tutte son queste
Padre del bene onnipotente; E' tua
Questo composto universal, cotanto
A meraviglia bello; or qua'l farai
Oggetto di stupor, tu stesso
Ineffabil——*.*

- These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
Unspeakable.-----

Milton's Paradise Lost, book v. l. 153.

But

But I am not always in the sublime : I sometimes descend to gather cowslips and daisies, or pursue some gaudy butterfly, with my pretty companions ; or please myself with dressing up their fine flaxen hair with tufts of flowers.

These, you will think, are very guiltless amusements ; and if I should tell you I have an amour, altogether as guiltless, dear Lady Sophia, would you not believe me ? I suppose you will ask me, if my charms have captivated the lord of the manor, or a justice of the quorum, or the high sheriff of the county. Alas ! my ambition sleeps : I should not aim at these glorious conquests, not even in my best apparel ; and, in that, I must tell you, I am as fine as any shepherdess in an Opera. But if you was to see the gentle youth that I have the vanity to think sighs for me, you will believe him some poetical form : he is so elegant, so beautiful, that when he appears, the scene is all Arcadia ; and (except a certain person with a star and garter) he is the handsomest youth that ever your eyes beheld. Nor will you wonder, when I tell you, his descent is from a younger branch of the S ——— family, a race remarkable for heroes and beauties. By the extravagance of his ancestors, the estate has been long sunk to about two or three hundred a-year. This youth was left from his infancy to the care of a grandmother, and bred as well as her narrow fortune would allow : but it is easy to perceive, he owes nothing but to nature, which has given him every advantage, without the vices of a polite education. He is about my own age, hardly turned of nineteen. When I first saw him, he was sitting under a shady beech, with an English Pastor Fido in his hand ; he appeared like another Adonis in the softest bloom of life. I cannot describe him better than in the following verses, writ by Lady B ——— on another subject.

“ His faultless shape appear’d with ev’ry grace ;

“ While beauty sat triumphant in his face :

“ His hair, the palest brown in ringlets flow’d,

U

“ And

" And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd :
 " His forehead white as snow, his radiant eyes
 " The bright celestial blue that paints the skies :
 " A guiltless blush his blooming cheeks disclose,
 " The native tincture of an op'ning rose :
 " His aspect open, artless, and serene,
 " Reveal'd the spotless mind that dwelt within."

In this perfection of youthful charms, he has all that modesty that rises from a delicacy of thought, and a constant fear of offending. I am so demure and reserved, that he has not the least suspicion of my partiality for him; nor dares discover his own for me, though he believes his station so superior to mine. He looks and sighs, but is as silent as your great-grandfather's busto that stands on his monument. I am indeed a very great prude, and never gave him an opportunity to speak on this subject; but if I should, the attempt would infallibly suffocate him. He lately brought me a basket of flowers from a little neat garden of his grandmother's; but he stood so long in suspense, with the basket in his hands, that I feared the fragrant blossoms would have been withered before he could come to a resolution to let me have them.

He would certainly have presented them to the queen with more assurance, and a better grace, had he been received with those propitious smiles, which never fail to encourage modest virtue, and scatter every human care.

ROSALINDA.

L E T T E R II.

To Lady Sophia, from the same.

NOT bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain,
 were ever more welcome, dear Lady Sophia,
 than your letter to me. Nothing ~~can~~ be more so-
 lemn than the profession of your friendship, nor
 more agreeable than your raillery on my gallant.

He

He may be, as you imagine, one of Count Gabalis' Sylphs, or some gentle spirit of the vale, propitious to virtuous lovers; or of the number of the sylvan genii, with whom he seems to converse more than with any thing of human race. I have seldom seen him, but either walking in some verdant inclosure under a hedge-row of shady trees, or sitting with a flute in his hand, by some purling rivulet, mimicking the nightingale's pensive note; while the melting music glides along the stream, and echoes through the flowery dale. In one of my rambles with my little mistress, I followed the course of a pretty cascade, which fell from an easy descent, and led me to a natural bower of trees, whose branches mingling at the top, formed a lofty arch, and excluded the noon-day's sultry beams. I entered the silent retreat, with as much veneration as if it had been sacred to some invisible power. But how great was my surprise, when I saw the lovely youth reclined on a mossy bank, lost in downy sleep! The verdant couch was canopied over with ivy, twining with honeysuckles.

Never did any thing human appear so beautiful! A blush, like the rosy morning, painted his face, while smiles of peace and conscious innocence seemed to bless the golden slumber. I gazed for a few moments with the same guiltless delight as an ethereal being would inspire, and then softly withdrew.

If he is, as you flatter me, some bright inhabitant of the air, the purity of my passion is very agreeable to a lover of that kind. It is a harmless lambent flame, that plays about my heart, and gives me no manner of uneasiness; it is such a sanctity of affection, as neither interrupts nor profanes my devotion; it has something more than the tenderness of friendship, and less than the warmth and violence of passion; and seems, like the dictates of guiltless nature, to soften the fatigues of my new station.

These refinements, Lady Sophia, will, I fear, be

a little incredible to you, who are dazzled with the lustre of a duke's coronet, and have placed your affections on mortal charms.

I am come now to the serious part of your letter. I know that religion is the governing principle of your actions; which makes me the more surprised, that you should persuade me to put myself on the hazard of a second trial. Are you sure, that neither the flattery nor threatenings of my father will prevail with me to renounce the reformed religion, and perjure myself, by giving my vows to a man my soul detests? Do you think the sparks of vanity and ambition extinguished in my breast? that greatness and pleasure have no charms? or that the tender affection I have for my father will ever be effaced? Oh! Lady Sophia, if you knew the anguish it cost me, to break through these soft, these powerful engagements, you would not persuade me to quit this peaceful retreat, and put the event on another trial.

Your care for me seems confined to this world, whatever becomes of me in the next. Could you meet me again shining in the drawing-room, or sparkling in the ring, it would perhaps content you; though I never glittered among the stars, nor was admitted into the celestial assemblies. If I lost the music of the spheres, I suppose your heart would be at rest, could I once more hear the transporting sound of —— a title, and be restored to my lost dignity. And yet the possession of these privileges never put me in an ecstasy; nor can I help fancying, Rosalinda has as musical a sound as Lady Frances. I never found a spell in those Right Honourable syllables for an aching head, or an heavy heart. My ladyship finds as great satisfaction in ranking a set of delft dishes on a free-stone chimney-piece, as ever I had in disposing my fine China on an Indian cabinet.

A clean cambric cap, and an Holland gown, wrought with natural flowers, is the top of my finery; in which I like myself as well, and think I look as handsome, as when I was dressed in bro-
cades

cares and jewels for a birth-night. Indeed, that happy occasion always gave an alacrity to my thoughts, and carried me through the glorious toil with pleasure. But I have a mind as easy and innocent now, as when burdened with those costly ornaments: a red cross-knot, a glass necklace, and flowers in my bosom, are the only useless parts of my dress; which is either the gift of nature, or honestly paid for; in which I am a thousand times more happy, than I should be in borrowed finery, at the expence of some industrious trader's ruin, and that of his whole family.

You find, Lady Sophia, I am very well at ease, and enjoy a perfect tranquillity, in this humble station. It was a principle truly rational and divine, that induced me to give up all the splendid distinctions of my birth, the ease and delicacy to which I had been accustomed, rather than basely deny those sacred truths, to which my soul religiously assented, and whose divine articles some of my glorious ancestors have sealed with their blood.

Instead of looking back with regret on my past grandeur, the resignation gives me a taste of celestial joy; the songs of angels could not soothe me with softer harmony, than what results from the secret approbation of my own reason; and while all within is peaceful and serene, whether I am in a palace or cottage, my happiness is secure.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER III.

To Lady Sophia, from the same.

YOUR advice, dear Lady Sophia, is, without question, well meant; but I dare not follow it. My father is so far from relenting, that I have had intelligence since I came here, that he has sworn by all that is holy, unless I will marry count Altamont,

Altamont, and embrace the Romish religion, he will settle his whole estate on some monastery at his decease.

This was what I expected; and I am sure you will not persuade me to renounce heaven, and damn myself, for the sordid purchase of eighty thousand pounds; nor would you considerately advise me, to hazard a celestial advancement for a gilded coronet, or prefer the flattery of mistaken mortals to the approbation of angels. They have been witnesses of my pious vows; and should I violate my faith, and turn apostate to heaven, those ministers of light would bring in their awful evidence, and stand my accusers at the last dreadful tribunal. And can you in earnest think it the effect of wisdom and just reflection, to dare the menaces of divine justice, rather than incur my father's unmerited resentment? Such I must term it, having found his affections entirely alienated before I left him. There is full evidence he was pleased with my flight, and takes no thought of making any inquiry about it.

But Heaven can witness with what reluctance I have torn myself from the sight of this unnatural parent; what anguish, what pangs of affection it cost me! This was the most difficult part of my conquest. The delicacy and softness to which I had been inured, the eclat of birth and quality, reputation and esteem of my friends, I resigned with some degree of fortitude. But here nature, with specious arguments, opposed, and had triumphed in my perdition, unassisted by the sacred oracles. To them I applied in this perplexity; and received aid from the heavenly illumination. Here I found it by the eternal truth determined,—
He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me. I worshipped, and obeyed the celestial dictates.

This was no rash inconsiderate action, but the effect of reason and design. After having counted the cost, I found the odds to be infinite; the damage

mage was momentary, the recompence unlimited and immense.

'Tis finish'd now, the great deciding part;
The world's subdu'd, and Heav'n has all my heart.

Earth's gaudy shews, and pomp of courts, adieu!
For ever now I turn my eyes from you.

What can the world, what can the artifice of hell propose, to tempt me to relinquish my choice? What could they lay in the balance against the sovereign good? What could they offer as an equivalent to the favour of the infinite Divinity, whose smiles enlighten the realms of joy, and fill the celestial inhabitants with unutterable ecstasy!—Ask those happy spirits who know what the light of his countenance imports, what should buy one moment's interval of their bliss.—Ask some radiant cherub, amidst his flaming raptures, at what price he values his enjoyment.—And when they have named the purchase, earth and hell may try to balance my glorious expectations.

Pleasure would court in vain, and beauty smile,
Glory in vain my wishes would beguile;
The persecutor's rage I would not fear!
Let death in ev'ry horrid form appear,
And with his keenest darts my breast assail!
When breath, and ev'ry vital spring, shall fail,
This sacred flame on brighter wings shall rise,
And unextinguish'd reach its native skies.

A thousand times blessed be that propitious Power, who, from the plenitude of bliss, and the highest exaltation of glory, descended to low mortality; and, by his own great example and sufferings, animated my breast with this divine fortitude, and marked a way to victory and immortal honour. How sincerely I have followed the heavenly illumination, my witness is within, and my record on high.

My father, I know, is inexorable, and has cut me off from his paternal care, and all the privileges

leges of my birth ; but while I look forward to the bright recompence prepared for suffering virtue, this loss sits lightly on my soul.

But friendship, with a stronger force, detains me. Here my soul is in suspense.—Dear Lady Sophia, how shall I speak my last adieu ? I feel the pangs of separation ; an anguish beyond all the emphasis of human learning to utter.—A-dieu ! we must meet no more, till the course of nature is dissolved, and the sun has measured his last radiant circle round the skies.

ROSALINDA.

[See the sequel of her story in letter 1. part III.]

L E T T E R IV.

To Laurinda.

JJOIN with me, dear Laurinda, in thanking Heaven, that I am once more returned to the mansion-seat of my forefathers ; for had I staid much longer in London, I had certainly left my wits there. Would you believe, that my serious retired temper could find charms in a multitude, or my heart be held captive in a splendid circle of a blue garter ! that I, who have been used to view the stars which glittered over my head in a clear night, should be dazzled with the lustre of an embroidered one ! and yet all this has befallen me. I was the other day making a visit to Cleomira, when the duke of ——'s chariot, with three laced footmen behind it, stopped at the door. I was at the window, and saw him alight. He is really a handsome man ; but his charms were extremely increased by the pomp which surrounded him ; the respectful awe with which his attendants approached him, heightened the majesty of his appearance. His legs were formed into the exactest symmetry, by the magnificent clocks of his stockings. The deference which was paid him at his first coming into the room, taught me to look upon

upon him as something above the race of mortals which I had been used to converse with. When I had time to consider his face, I found it received a much greater addition from a fair wig loaded with powder, than it could have done from artless ringlets of the most lovely hair. After he had sat a little, he asked Cleomira to go with him to his house, to see a fine set of hangings, which were just come over from the gobelins. She excused herself, as being obliged to stay and entertain me: but he asked me to be of the party; and as soon as Cleomira's coach was ready, we all went together. But if I was charmed with the sparkling chariot and embroidered coat, I was enchanted with the house. The lofty roofs, the painted stair-case, the gilded wainscot, struck me with a pleasure I had never felt. However, it was an unquiet joy, and I longed to be at home; for I thought myself in a dangerous situation. As soon as Cleomira had set me down at my lodgings, I immediately set about packing up my things; and the very next morning, in the height of my ecstasy, left London, and all its pomp, behind me. But how are either my eyes or every object altered since I have been absent! The house used to appear a handsome ancient building, but now I find it only a Gothic heap of stone; the ceilings are so low that I am afraid of knocking my brains out; and the entry so narrow, that if I should meet any body, I should certainly run back again, for fear of being squeezed against the wall in endeavouring to pass. I want to pull down the venerable pictures of my ancestors, because they were not painted in Italy. The bow-windows terrify me, and must be changed into Venetian ones; for there is no bearing the light which strikes through so unfashionable a piece of architecture. The rosy daughters of the neighbouring 'squires are become, in my eyes, awkward figures, and there is something so ungenteel and coarse in such an exuberance of health, that I cannot bear to look at them. The young men of the village appear downright bump-

kins; and I cannot perceive any beauty in the cheerful bloom of their countenances, or just proportion of their shape, through the melancholy disguise of unpowdered locks, and plain broad-cloth apparel. If they talk to me, I am amazed how a man has the assurance to open his mouth any where, who has not a right to speak in the house of Peers, and can never comprehend how any thing worth communicating can enter into a head which was never circled with a coronet. Sentences which are uttered by plain Cleon, have no force; though perhaps the same words would have all the charms of eloquence, if pronounced by an earl.

You see I am not very happy at present in the society of my old acquaintance; but I hope this delicacy will soon wear off, or I shall not be able to behave myself patiently among a set of people, with whom I have formerly spent many happy hours.

Adieu, my dear Laurinda. My politeness will not lessen, but increase the value I set upon your friendship; since I am sure the beau-monde would approve me for being unalterably

Yours, &c.

LAVINIA.

L E T T E R V.

The sequel of the story of Sylvia, in the third letter of the first part of Letters Moral and Entertaining. To Belinda.

Madam,

YOUR suspicions are too just, of the occasion of my late sickness. I have waited with great impatience for the satisfaction of disclosing the secrets of my soul to you; but my strength would not sooner permit me to give you this proof of my obedience to your commands, and the confidence I have in your fidelity.

Why was I formed with these soft inclinations,
this

this fatal propensity to love ! How happy are you, who, amidst the gayest advantages of youth and fortune, can act with such a graceful regularity, and govern your passions with an absolute command, free from those tender emotions which interrupt the felicity of my life.

I spent the last winter in the country with my father, whose pious instructions, confirmed by his own practice, directed me to a refined and immortal happiness: nor could any invitations from the Comtesse de R —, nor all my brother's importunity, prevail with me to quit a retirement, where I found so much peace, and unmolested tranquillity. My criminal passion for Monsieur le Comte — seemed perfectly extinguished, and gave place to a nobler attachment: heaven had all my vows; thither, with a divine ambition, my soul aspired. This sacred ardour, like incense, mingled with the morning fragrance, and cheered the evening-shades; the whispering brooks and sylvan retreats witnessed to the heavenly flame; where, in language like this, I often addressed the invisible, but present Divinity.

“ O thou, whom unseen I love ! tell me by what
 “ gentle influence thou dost attract my desires.
 “ These eyes have never seen thy lovely face, no
 “ accent of thy voice has reached my ear; and yet
 “ thou art more intimate to my soul than any of
 “ the objects of sense. To thee I tell my inmost
 “ care, and open every grief; while some heaven-
 “ ly gale dispels the gloom, and breathes eternal
 “ peace and fragrance on my soul.

“ Not blest'd Arabia, when her spices flow,
 “ And load the western breezes with their spoils,
 “ Is half so sweet; nor half so sweet the breath
 “ Of op'ning roses, when the dewy morn
 “ Renews the garden's pride, while the glad sun
 “ Calls out the blooming life of every flower.

“ My wishes fly beyond the bounds of this low
 “ creation, and terminate in thee, the spring of
 “ fresh and ever-blooming joys. It is thee, ab-

“stractly thee, oh uncreated Beauty, that I love !
“not as a miser loves his wealth, or the ambitious
“his grandeur ; not as the libertine loves his
“pleasure, or the generous man his friend : these
“are flat similitudes, and would profane the sacred
“ardour ; but thou canst read the unutter-
“able thought, and explain the secret meaning
“of my soul. Search its inmost recesses ; and if
“thou findest any competitor there, remove the
“darling vanity, and blot every name but thine
“from my heart.”

In this elevation, my dear Belinda, would you not think me secure from mortal charms ? Could one of your equal temper conceive there was such an easy transition from devotion to love, — mere earthly love ! Would the most uncharitable person in the world have said, that from this sublime situation I should, in a few moments, quit the skies, and bid the angels farewell !

But such was the event. My brother coming hastily to me into the garden, where I was walking, told me the Comte de R—— intended him the honour of a visit, and would be with us the next morning. He left me immediately without observing the consternation I was in, or giving himself any trouble about my panic or vapours.

I knew not what or where I was. The celestial scenes, that had just before engaged my contemplation, vanished ; the heavens were no more ; paradise, with all its glories, disappeared like a fairy vision ; my flight was finished, and I sunk to low mortality again. I asked myself, if I were asleep or awake, in my right senses, or out of my wits ? whether I really knew my own name, and was indeed the happy person, that, a few minutes before, had looked with indifference, or contempt, on all the gay allurements of the world ? In this confusion I stood as if I had been fixed to the place by a spell, till my father sent for me to consult about some family-affairs, as he had always done since my mother's death.

The Comte's visit was wholly intended to my brother,

brother. They were engaged in the most perfect friendship, founded on resembling virtues, and an equal abhorrence of every kind of vice. It was a full year since I had seen him. It is probable he never suspected my folly, nor once imagined the cause of my retirement; this yielded me some satisfaction, and gave me hopes I should conceal my guilty passion.

But I was undeceived the moment the lovely youth arrived. An innate grandeur gave a dignity to his mien; the splendor of virtue brightened his aspect; there was something, in his whole behaviour, so benign and engaging, that I found it impossible to resist the soft insinuation the pleasing delirium entirely possessed me, and I betrayed myself by a thousand inadvertencies. However, I had some pauses of discretion, and started with horror at my own injustice; my soul was full of anxiety, to think how I should bear this inward struggle for the seven or eight days, which the Comte intended to stay, the first of which was not yet past.

The summer was now in its pride; and as soon as the evening made walking pleasant, my brother conducted his agreeable guest through a variety of charming walks to an artificial grotto. The top was round and lofty, painted with a beautiful sky, hung with a great number of little crystal sconces formed like stars; in the midst there was placed one larger than the rest, shaped like a crescent. The sides of this fine cavity were rock-work, adorned with branches of coral, mother of pearl, and a great variety of counterfeit gems, sparkling among the well-imitated clefts of marble. It was paved in flowers with a kind of Mosaic work; the seats were shaped like little banks, covered with green velvet instead of moss. In this enchanting retreat a supper was ordered, attended with an exquisite concert of voices, and instruments; Milton's morning-hymn was sung, and several of the solemnest Italian compositions. The whole performance was noble and pathetic,
while

while the gardens and groves around returned a thousand soft melodious echoes.

This grave music was exactly suited to the charming stranger's genius ; and yet, through the whole evening, never did any thing appear so abstract, so listless, and so inattentive. As soon as the entertainment was over, and the company withdrawn, (except my brother), he begged to be excused from staying a week, as he designed, and that he might be suffered to return the next morning, which, after some apologies on both sides, was agreed.

I was so ill in the morning, that it prevented my seeing the Comte ; who could not but discover the unhappy conquest he had made, and certainly left us so suddenly, to free me from such a criminal perplexity, or to stifle the same kindling guilt in his own breast. This last was what my brother believed, and thought it as glorious an instance of virtue and friendship, as it was possible for a man in the warmth of youthful passion to give.

Whatever it was, my disorder increased, till it came to a dangerous fever. Death was now in view ; my tender cares, and fancied distresses, were lost in a more important concern ; the little amusements of the world vanished like dreams ; a hovering mist veiled the face of Nature, and darkened all its beauty ; nor could any sound of joy cheer the sullen hours. I was on the confines of the grave, entering the habitations of the dead. This prospect had a solemnity in it, beyond whatever I conceived in the hours of health.

Think, vain fond heart, when on the steep
Of that tremendous awful deep,

Eternity, in sad suspense I stood,
How all my trifling hopes and fears,
My senseless joys and idle tears,

Vanish'd at prospect of the frightful flood !

I stood shivering on the brink, looking forward
with

with a dreadful curiosity: all before me was hid in darkness, and impenetrable secrecy: the great experiment was untried, the region of spirits strange and unknown: it was yet a perhaps, an uncertainty, on which my hopes depended: the grand question, whether I should be happy or miserable for ever? was yet undecided: I was startled at a mere possibility of being shut out of the starry courts, and excluded from the illustrious assembly of happy immortals.

Indeed I had no intervals of despair; my hopes and fears were equally balanced. No allowed or unrepented crime pressed my soul. Virtue had been my early, my deliberate choice, the superior design and governing spring of all my conduct. I hope I had made some preparation for death, and had often meditated on the serious subject; but it was in the hours of perfect health and vivacity. I had never before groaned on a sick-bed; these solemnities were new, and infinitely more awful than I had ever conceived.

Death threatened me now at a disadvantage, in the crisis of folly. An unusual disorder of mind, sickness, and pain, gave every thing a gloomy aspect, and heightened even natural frailties into the blackest guilt; while the grisly monarch stood insulting before me, and drew his sable curtains round my bed. But a superior Power rescued me from his ravenous jaws, and bid me live, to speak my great deliverer's praise.

This sickness has given me another set of thoughts. My apprehensions of dying are as different from what they were before, as the evidence of waking certainties are from the airy illusions of a dream. My notions were once very gay and romantic; I fancied I should take my final leave of the world with an exceeding good grace, and bid adieu very sedately to all the vanities beneath the sun. Till it came to a trial, I was for making my exit in the full bloom of youth, and quitting the stage in the most becoming manner. While the fatal moment appeared at a distance, I was
delighted

delighted with such images of mortality, as the author of the following verses has described, and with great gaiety repeated these lines.

" Indulgent death, prepare thy gentle dart,
 " To strike a willing and unguarded heart !
 " Where are thy dreadful looks, and gloomy train ?
 " Fantastic mortals all these terrors feign.
 " Thou hast an angel's smile, and heav'nly grace ;
 " I find transporting beauties in thy face,
 " And yield, unforc'd, unto thy cold embrace. }
 " I come a joyful captive to thy arms ;
 " This moment has for me ten thousand charms.
 " For thee all human things I here resign ;
 " My spotless faith and virgin vows are thine.
 " Myrtillo's sighs, and Sylvia's tears, in vain
 " In these dull regions would my soul retain :
 " Forbear your fruitless grief ; I go to prove
 " Unbounded pleasures, and immortal love.
 " Oh ! let me, unmolested, close my eyes ;
 " We'll meet again in yonder blissful skies !
 " Young virgins, haste, a flow'ry wreath prepare,
 " And dress with guiltless ornaments my hair ;
 " Adorn me with the summer's painted pride,
 " And lay the vestments of the dead aside :
 " Nor let a pensive look, or mournful tear,
 " To cloud the lustre of your eyes, appear :
 " Each nymph be dress'd in robes of spotless light,
 " The foldings streaming far with silver white ;
 " Let smiles on all your lovely faces shine,
 " Nor at my glorious destiny repine :
 " With decent joy conduct me to the tomb,
 " And hang your garlands round my solitary
 room."

This is to expire in heroics, to give up the ghost with a poetical decorum, and to be interred *a-la-mode d' Arcadia*. Such sentiments as these may please to amuse the mind in the hours of health and serenity ; but it requires a strength superior to all human fortitude to support the soul in the agonies of separation. There the aids of reason
and

and nature fail ! only a Power divine can disperse the fatal gloom, and brighten it into celestial day.

This long letter is owing to your own curiosity, and must be the excuse of,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

SYLVIA.

LETTER VI.

To Leticia ; giving an account of the death of Amanda.

I Am just returned from paying my last ceremony to the remains of the late beautiful Amanda. The surprising state in which for several weeks the corpse lay, the richness of the coffin, or the pomp with which she was interred, could no way disguise from my thoughts the melancholy circumstances that attended the last scene of her life. I never think of the manner of her death, but a thousand terrors rise in my imagination, to reproach me for joining with the rest of her flatterers, in concealing her danger, and soothing her with hopes of recovery, till death convinced her of the fatal delusion.

On this subject I hope you will give me leave to be serious. My youth, which you so often object against the gravity of my temper, is no argument in this case ; the fair Amanda was still younger, and yet, after all her bloom and vivacity, I saw her a pale and senseless carcase.

How lately did this celebrated thing
Shine in the box, and sparkle in the ring !

It is true, the mouldering clay, by a stately monument, is distinguished from vulgar dust : but how poor a consolation is that to an immortal spirit, fated to endless misery, or unbounded joy !

You may laugh, and in poor wild wit ridicule these solemn reflections, and lampoon me with the character of a saint ; but, my dear Leticia, this mirth would be more unseasonable and ridiculous

Y

than

than my morals. However, I am more charitable than to accuse you of such levity.

Since you have put me, by your own commands, on this melancholy account, I hope it will be for your advantage, when you come to act the closing part of life.

I told you in my last letter, the accidental reason of being in the same house with Amanda, and her full resolution not to go into the country, however necessary it was for her health. No argument could prevail with her to quit the amusements of the town, in which she had always a share, till the positive order of her physicians confined her from going abroad. Her distemper was lingering, but incurable; this, in my hearing, the doctor owned to her eldest sister, in whose family she was. He told us, that he thought two or three months would be the utmost limits of her life; which he begged might be concealed, and that we would keep her as cheerful as possible. But the natural gaiety of her temper prevented that care; for her business was to get rid of time and leisure. She could not go to the masquerade, but took care to let her acquaintance know how welcome their appearance in every fantastic disguise, would be in her own apartment. She languished after the delights of the stage; but to supply that, orders were given for some farce or comedy to be read for her diversion. Sometimes a game at piquet passed away the tedious moments: she has often kept the cards in her hands, till a swooning fit interrupted the important affair. This, you will think, was a pious preparation for the last change! a glorious manner of concluding the action of human life!

• Her beauty was as much her joy and contemplation as ever. She was exceeding pale; but there was a certain elegance in her features, and something so peculiarly charming in her air, that triumphed over her indisposition; and to give a flush to her complexion, she had prevailed with her sister to change her window-curtains, which were yellow silk,

silk, for some of a bright crimson. Her toilet took up as much of her time as her strength would permit; the adjusting a becoming and modish undress would sometimes so exhaust her spirits, that she was forced to pause, and leave the mighty task unfinished. It was but two days before she died, that she ordered the most fashionable dishabille to be sent for from France; as if she designed to expire genteelly, and appear polite, even in the languishments of death.

Her sister, though many years older, under the influence of the same unhappy education, indulged the vanity of her inclination in every punctilio. Whatever was the consequence, the dying fair must be diverted from every thing that was reasonable and serious. One would wonder her invention could find such a series of impertinencies. Monkeys, parrots, buffoons, soft music, and tender songs, were always ready to entertain every little interval of ease or strength the poor unthinking patient had.

This to me was the most melancholy scene in the world. I have forced a smile, when my heart has been inwardly bleeding with grief and compassion. Not a day past, but, with tears streaming from my eyes, I importuned Marina to let her sister know her danger, and to send for a neighbouring clergyman, of great piety, sometimes to pray with her, and, at least, to acquaint her, she was not immortal; that it was possible for her to die, as well as other people.

This advice she rejected, as positively as if I had persuaded her to send for an executioner, to dispatch her sister into the next world. "Then, Madam," said I, "at least forbear to distract and hinder her from every serious reflection."

"Serious reflection! my dear Emilia," she replied, "where have you learned this cant? How long have you practised that faintly air? Look into the glass, and see if you can forbear laughing at yourself. Would you have me put on that precise look, and murder my sister, by tell-
 Y 2 "ing

“ing her that she had but a month to live ! It
“would infallibly throw her into the agonies of
“death. You cannot be so barbarous to give me
“this advice. You know what effect our pious
“fraud had, of putting St Austin’s meditations in-
“to her hands, instead of Otway’s plays ; the ac-
“cidental opening it at a meditation on death,
“had almost thrown her into a convulsion. But
“this,” continued she, “is the effect of your strange
“notions. You represent the Supreme Being in
“such a gloomy view, that it makes you perfectly
“superstitious. My thoughts, I confess, are more
“lightsome and free ; I believe the mercies of
“Heaven unbounded, and that there is nothing in
“these little gaities offensive to God, or injurious
“to man. Nor indeed is a future state of punish-
“ment any part of my creed. I make no question
“but my sister will be insensible or happy when-
“ever she dies, and it shall be my business to make
“her so the short space she has to live, which may
“be a month or two longer, by the doctor’s con-
“jectures the last visit he made. Come,” added
she, “you must go with me ; and endeavour to,
“divert her ; but pray put off that sanctified aspect,
“and try to look a little more like an inhabitant
“of this world.”

I could not refuse attending her to Amanda’s ap-
partment ; whom we found in a musing melancholy
posture ; which to divert, Marina told her, she
looked exceeding well, and nothing could be more
genteel than the dithabille in which she appeared.
This a little brightened the chagrin on her visage,
and made her something attentive to the pranks of
a new monkey, which her page had just introduced
to divert his fair mistress ; who, in the midst
of the recreation, was seized with a fainting fit,
sunk back in an easy chair, and after a few hours
convulsive pangs, gave up the ghost.

I have been so particular in this account, in
hopes it will have a lasting influence on your con-
duct ; and, by being faithful to my living friend, I
may

may atone, if possible, for my insincerity to the dead. I have a thousand and a thousand times reproached myself, for not letting Amanda plainly know her danger, leaving the event to Heaven. I am convinced it was my duty, in spite of all the false rules by which the friendship of this world is guided.

These two sisters had the misfortune, in their early years, to lose their mother, and were left to the conduct of a father, who made it his pride to think and live freely. He looked on all religion as a state-policy, and put the Bible and Alcoran on a level. With these principles he perverted his daughters minds; and, except observing the strictest forms of honour and reputation, they were governed by no rule but their caprice, and the fashions of the age. Thus they saw their father live, and thus they saw him die, entirely negligent and thoughtless of any thing beyond the period of human life. Instead of prayers, and pious meditations, one of his libertine companions read Dryden's translation of Lucretius to him, in his last hours; while fearless and insensible he met death, and all its succeeding horrors.

Amanda's death has made a deep impression on my thoughts; I have bid the modish world adieu, and am now retired to my brother's country-seat. You may call it the spleen, but I hope it is the effect of just reasoning, that I have never read any thing since I came hither, but books of devotion. Mr Law's excellent treatise of Christian perfection has been instructive to me. The character of Miranda has raised a noble emulation in my mind, though I despair of reaching that perfection.

If you make me a visit, you will not find me engaged in cards at one and-thirty, nor telling riddles, or drawing valentines with my country-neighbours; but musing by the side of a gentle cascade, or sitting in some fragrant bower, listening to the songs of heaven in Dr Watts' pious numbers.

" Hark ! how beyond the narrow bounds

" Of time and space they run,

" And

“ And speak in most majestic sounds

“ The Godhead of the Son ;

“ How on the Father’s breast he lay

“ The darling of his soul,

“ Infinite years before the day

“ Or heav’ns began to roll.

“ And now they sink their lofty tone,

“ And milder notes they play ;

“ And bring the eternal Godhead down,

“ To dwell in humble clay.”

If this long letter should give you the spleen, I hope it will be your advantage. Nothing but that is the intention of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

ÆMILIA.

L E T T E R VII.

The answer, to Æmilia.

YOUR letter, I hope, will be a restraint on the great levity of my temper. The account of Amanda’s death will leave me without excuse, if I should carry my vanity so far, as to act the last part of life, with so little propriety. I cannot, without the warmest gratitude to Heaven, reflect on the advantage of a different education and principles, which I hope will never be effaced from my soul.

But, my dear Æmilia, I shall never be so good as you would have me, nor as I sincerely desire to be. I have yet some tender engagements to break, before I bid adieu to the world, and rank myself in the number of departed spirits. I cannot on a sudden contract such intimacies with invisible beings, as to abandon all my material acquaintance. I despair of following you and Miranda, who, if you were Roman Catholics, are in a fair way of being canonized, as many a miserable sinner has been before you. Of whatever religion I am, it is certain,

certain, I shall never be numbered in the same class with St Winefrid.

You love poetry, and it is a pleasure to me to oblige you with any thing writ on a subject so agreeable to your taste, as these verses inscribed to Mrs M ———; a person of strict piety, though she does not turn recluse, and live in a grotto; but converses freely with the polite world, and keeps an unblemish'd character in it. I will leave you now to your shady retreats, and murmuring brooks.

On SOLITUDE.

Inscribed to Mrs ———.

YE groves, and flow'ry vales, in you we find
The first unblemish'd joys for man design'd;
Your charming scenes th' attentive mind supply
With pleasure in its nice variety.

Nature does here her virgin-smiles afford,
And shews us paradise again restor'd;
Our souls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care, and conscious guilt retire.

Propitious Solitude, thou kind retreat
From all the vain amusements of the great!
In thee alone, without disgust, we prove
The endless sweets of innocence and love.
Beauty and wit may find a refuge here:
Unenvy'd ev'n Belinda might appear;
Each nymph would yield the uncontested prize,
And every swain pay homage to her eyes.
Flourish, ye gentle shades and rural seats,
Let endless verdure deck your soft retreats;
Peace dwell upon your banks, ye silver streams,
The muses chaste delights, and constant themes!
For ever you the poets breast inspire
With sprightly joys, and wake the golden lyre.

Retir'd in fragrant bowers, the Hebrew king
For Pharaoh's daughter touch'd the tuneful string;
The fair Egyptian's charms his soul possess'd,
And fill'd with sacred ecstasies his breast;

Celestial

Celestial numbers melted from his tongue,
In human figures truths divine were sung;
While Lebanon's high cedars lent an ear,
And Siloe rose above its banks to hear;
Hermon and Carmel kept the pleasing lay,
And Sharon's painted vale appear'd more gay.

What pow'r, enchanting Solitude, is thine!
That men, for thee the dearest ties resign?
For thee the monarch lays his crown aside,
And the young lover quits his weeping bride;
The hero gives the chace of honour o'er,
And fame, and glorious conquest, tempt no more;
The softer sex, with fearless piety,
To woods and savage wilds have follow'd thee.

Fair Magdalen the flatt'ring world declin'd,
And to a narrow cave her charms confin'd.
In Herod's wanton court admir'd she shone,
And all the tempting paths of vice had known;
To hers, the beauties of the Hebrew race,
Rachel and Tamar's boasted fame, gave place;
Love triumph'd in her voice, her looks, and mien,
And love in all her fatal form was seen;
A thousand youthful hearts her pow'r obey'd,
And homage to her soft dominion paid.
But thus in nature's gayest bloom admir'd,
A penitent she gloriously retir'd;
Her costly ornaments are laid aside,
With all the vain address of female pride:
Her hair neglected, o'er her bosom flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd;
A mourning robe she wore, a pensive grace,
And soft remorse sat on her lovely face;
A vaulted rock for her retreat she chose,
Among the cliffs a moun'ring fountain rose.
Her contemplation, pray'r, and lofty praise,
In solemn order, measur'd out her days:
To heav'n her vows with early ardour fled,
Before the sun his morning-glories spread;
When from his height he pour'd down golden
streams,
Her wing'd devotion met his noon-day beams;

'Till

'Till in the west with fainter light he shone,
 Untir'd the heav'nly votary went on :
 The moon serene in midnight-splendor sat,
 With countless stars attending on her state ;
 The cares and noisy business of the day,
 In rest, and soothing dreams, dissolv'd away ;
 The drowsy waters crept along the shore,
 And shepherds pin'd upon the banks no more ;
 The trees their whispers ceas'd, the gentle gale
 No longer danc'd along the dewy vale ;
 The peaceful echoes, undisturb'd with sound,
 Lay slumb'ring in the cavern'd hills around :
 Faction, and care, and midnight-riot slept ;
 But still the lovely saint her holy vigils kept.

If you could but find such a convenient habitation as this, it would be to your heart's content. For my part, I shall never hide my virtue in obscurity ; it shall not be my fault, if the world is not instructed by my example. But, to be serious, I verily believe we have both the same important interests in view, though we are so different in our tempers. We never meet, but it puts me in mind of the two weeping and laughing philosophers. The very same cause has often had the opposite effect on our dispositions ; but, in spite of this seeming contradiction, that sacred amity by which we are united, shall never be violated by,

Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant,

LETICIA.

LETTER VIII.

To Leticia, in answer to the foregoing letter.

IF you have heard of my brother's death, you can be no stranger to the excess of my grief. The poem you sent came very seasonably. In the Fair Penitent I found a plan of life suited to my melancholy temper ; which has found more relief by a sort of visionary consolation, than from all

the efforts of reason. You have often thought fit to divert me with your sleeping as well as waking reveries; and I know I cannot oblige you more than by relating this uncommon dream.

Whether it was the excursion of fancy, or whether the scene was disposed by an angel, I cannot determine. But as I was sitting in a summer-house, my usual retreat in an afternoon, reading Milton's elegy on Lycidas, a downy slumber closed my eyes, and sunk my sorrows in the pleasing oblivion.

I found myself in a place gay as the poet's description of the Cyprian groves. Beneath an inviting shade I rested on a bank of violets, and, without surprise, saw my brother in a glittering habit, and beautiful beyond the race of men, approaching. He seated himself by me, and with a smile of celestial charity thus began.

"It is with the highest satisfaction, my dear sister, I come to give you a relation that will animate your virtue, as you assisted mine in a state of mortal imperfection. You know I had some intervals of doubt, and nature shrunk at the entrance of the gloomy valley; the darkness was untried and impenetrable. But how great was my surprise, when I found this momentary night succeeded by an eternal noon! while my guardian angel, with an aspect of ineffable sweetness, bid me follow him.

"I obeyed. In an instant the earth was lost to my view, the sun diminished to a star; innumerable worlds were past, with a speed swifter than a morning-ray; the gates of heaven now appeared, and at the angel's command rolled back on their golden hinges. But what glories were disclosed, no language on earth can describe! Omnipotence and infinite wisdom seemed without limits here to have been exerted. Through enchanting groves, I traced the delicious borders, where the fountains of life pour out their streams. Passing from one scene of wonders to another, ardent to pay my homage, I pressed forward to the sacred throne.

"The

“ The supreme benignity at once beamed forth
 “ on me. Lost in ecstasy, I fell prostrate before
 “ my Sovereign ; when, with accents that breath-
 “ ed immortal joy and harmony, he bid me rise
 “ to perfect purity and bliss.

“ A starry tiara was placed on my head, and a
 “ golden lute in my hand. I mingled with the
 “ grand assembly, ten thousand times ten thou-
 “ sand, ransomed from every language and tribe
 “ on earth. With them I joined my grateful tri-
 “ bute to the great Benefactor of mankind, whose
 “ sufferings and death had given me acceptance,
 “ victory, and life. I rejoiced in God my Saviour ;
 “ I triumphed in the height of his exaltation ;
 “ infinite majesty, softened by equal love, appear-
 “ ed in his form, the brightness of the Divinity,
 “ the joy of heaven, the theme of every celestial
 “ song.

“ I have made this impression on your sleeping
 “ imagination, being permitted to give you no o-
 “ ther account of my happiness. Be not impatient
 “ of the afflictions of life. The whole of your
 “ mortal duration is but a moment, to the future
 “ recompence. If you live to the honour of your
 “ Maker, and the advantage of your companions
 “ on earth, it will for ever heighten the trans-
 “ ports of your joy in the realms of light.”

Here, with soft melody, the pleasing scene va-
 nished. I waked at the imaginary music, and
 found it had left a calm and sedate composure in
 my soul. Like a beam from heaven it dispersed
 the gloom, and opened a serene and lightsome
 prospect before me.

—————Ye dreary wastes, adieu !
 Reason, religion, now I follow you.
 Enough to nature and the grave are paid ;
 Behold, the fair celestial scene's display'd.

It appeared too regular for a natural excursion
 of fancy ; but I shall leave that undetermined.

Amidst all your gaities, you are as guiltless of incredulity as

Your humble servant

ÆMILIA.

L E T T E R IX.

The answer, to Æmilia.

I Am not surprised, that such a shining vision as you have described, has allayed your grief, and restored the tranquillity of your mind; but I am afraid you are not yet gay enough, to excuse the vivacity of my temper, or suffer me to laugh. It is without your consent if I am happy, and very much pleased with any of the transitory vanities of this world; which, I must own, have some prevailing charms for me, from whose soft captivity I cannot yet get free.

I was last night at a play, in which there was the part of a princess well acted, and the sentiments belonging to the character were just and noble; yet I was not half so well pleased, as I had often been before with the same representation. I soon found the reason of my dissatisfaction, and the difference between imitated and real greatness.

—The Princess-Royal was at the play, and just in my view. All that elegance and dignity of thought the poet had described, brightened her aspect; every virtue was there conspicuous; the gentle, the engaging smile, was beyond the reach of numbers: a thousand nameless graces discovered the innate perfections of her mind, and gave the charming Princess a distinction peculiar to conscious merit, and beyond all imitation.

I intend you a visit before the spring (that fairest season of the year) is past. I am willing to see you once more in this world; for I am not sure we shall meet in the next, though I sincerely desire it. Nothing will more contribute to my happiness than your conversation: I catch some emanation of your virtue, and am inspired with new convictions

convictions of the vanity of the world ; my reason gains ground, and my passions subside. I may venture to look grave in your company ; but in my present modish way of life, I dare not so much as put on an air of thought and reflection, nor seem to have any thing in the earth to do, but to amuse myself, and the volatile beings I converse with. You see, if I was wiser than I really am, I should take pains to conceal it, rather than be singular and unfashionable.

I have sent the verses I promised to procure for you.

ON BEAUTY.

Victorious Beauty ! by what potent charm
Dost thou the soul of all its force disarm !
We bless our chains, abhor our liberty,
And yield the uncontested prize to thee.
Whether we rash or calm designs pursue,
Thine is the glorious motive still in view.
For thee we search the wide creation round,
But thou art no where in perfection found ;
Some blemish still remains on mortal pride,
And crowding years its airy boasts deride.

Triumphant beauty sits in Flavia's eyes ;
But while we gaze, the trembling lustre dies.
Bellair's completely form'd with ev'ry grace,
A faultless shape, and an enchanting face ;
In all his motions, each becoming air,
Greatness and native elegance appear ;
Careless and free, in life's deluding bloom,
While envious death threatens a hasty doom,
Some gentle mistress, full of love and truth,
Shall soon lament the dear unrival'd youth.

Thou lovely, fleeting, transitory thing,
From what immense perfection dost thou spring !
To what complete original return,
While we thy short appearance vainly mourn !
Howe'er our doating thoughts mistake the way
To certain bliss, thine is a friendly ray
That points the passage to unclouded day.

}
Yo

Ye heavenly forms, in all your pomp appear,
 And shew us what immortal beauties are,
 What life, what rosy bloom your faces wear !
 Put on each smiling grace, and conqu'ring charm,
 And all the force of mortal love disarm,
 For still our restless thoughts take glorious aims,
 Howe'er seduc'd by these inferior flames;
 The leading passion, the supreme desire,
 To things divine and infinite aspire.

Eternal Excellence ! 'tis only thee
 We search, through nature's bright variety !
 Our eager wishes, with impetuous force,
 To thee, unknown, direct their endless course.
 'Tis thee we seek and love, for thee we pine ;
 The pow'rful charm, the soft attraction's thine ;
 To thee these sighs, these tender vows ascend,
 Th' unseen Divinity we still attend ;
 Sick of these fading toys, our thoughts press on
 To joys untasted, excellence unknown.

Thou great Original of all that's fair,
 Whose glories no similitude can bear,
 Before the darting splendor of thy eyes,
 The pride of all created beauty dies !

This I hope is the latent sense of my soul, in all
 its motions, though I am not yet so wise as you
 would have me, nor as I intend to be. But in
 whatever character you put me, do me the justice
 to believe I am sincerely

Yours, &c.

LETICIA.

L E T T E R X.

*From Lysander, giving a relation of the tragical end of
 his valet de chambre.*

My Lord,

YOUR commands shall be punctually obeyed,
 whatever reluctance I find to enter on this re-
 lation, of which you have been so imperfectly in-
 formed.

The

The young valet de chambre, whose story you enquire after, was the same I brought out of France, whom you took some notice of when I met your Lordship in my return to England; where I was received again into my mother's family, my father being in my absence deceased.

I had a young sister about fifteen, of whom I was always exceeding fond; and now thought it my part to see her as advantageously married as her birth and fortune required. After I had spent some time at home, I proposed several good matches for her; every one of which she obstinately refused.

This gave me some suspicion of my valet, who appeared to be a handsome youth about eighteen. He had a charming voice, and sung to a lute, which he touched with surprising skill and sweetness. My sister loved music, and he was always ambitious of entertaining her. There was no difficulty to discover her inclinations; truth and nature appeared in all her actions. But Palanty's conduct was past my penetration. However, I resolved to part with him to prevent my sister's infamy. As dissolute and abandoned as my own manners had been, I had the nicest sense of what would touch her reputation. With a restless mind I was one day walking in my garden, and, turning with some precipitation down a shady alley, I surprized Palanty reading a paper; which, suddenly snatching from him, convinced me of my sister's folly.

I took the opportunity immediately to dismiss him; and seeing me resolved, he fell on his knees, entreating me not to expose a stranger in a foreign country; confessing the whole truth, that she was an unhappy woman, the Cardinal of B———'s niece, who, governed by the dictates of her affection, had followed me in that disguise.

This she told me with a face unstained with a rosy blush, or the least appearance of that modest disorder so natural and becoming her sex. My confusion was much greater than hers; and yet

one would not think me over-bashful, nor extremely scrupulous, with regard to my character. Her impudence made me almost suspect the truth of what she told me : but I was not in an inquisitive humour, and cared not what she was if I had never been embarrassed with her. I had seen her face too often to find any charm of novelty in it. The passion she pretended for me was a mystery, when I remembered she had been without constraint a witness, as well as a pimp, to many of my criminal amours.

However, as I was now without anxiety for my sister, this artful woman, by her importunities, prevailed on my easy temper to let her stay in the family till she could find some other settlement. She staid ; and, in some moment of darkness, seduced me to her ruin, and my own infamy. She was with child ; I got lodgings for her, and, pretending some disgust, dismissed her as a valet ; my mother and sister being entirely ignorant of the disguise of her sex.

In the mean time, my mother, who took the chagrin of my temper for a reformation of manners, was very solicitous with me to conclude a marriage she had proposed to a young woman of great merit, and a very agreeable person. I pursued the affair but coldly, and in mere complaisance to a most indulgent parent ; till, by frequent conversation with this charming woman, she engaged me by all the ties of reason and virtuous love. The modesty of her behaviour, joined to the most sincere and obliging temper in the world, secured her empire. Her wit was sparkling and inoffensive ; deceit and malice were strangers to her breast ; a thousand nameless beauties appeared in all her conduct. Till now I never knew the force of love, nor any of the refined sentiments that noble passion inspired. In what guiltless joys did the hours pass that I spent with my lovely Cimene.

But what tongue can express the anguish I felt from my criminal affair with Palanty ! I was forced

ced to visit her, for fear she should divulge the secret, in revenge, and ruin me with the charming Cimene. You are a stranger, my Lord, to these vexations; your whole conduct has been governed by the rules of honour and reason. Oh, may my worst enemy never know the curse of an engagement with a lewd, imperious woman! Fear kept me a slave to her caprice, and forced me to endure all the insolence and rage of language she had practised in her masculine habit among her inferiors; nor durst I offer to controul her expensive vanity, being willing to soften her, till she was past the dangerous state she was now in.

But no consideration could make me delay my intended marriage, let the event be what it would. The day was set that Heaven, in Cimene, gave me the greatest blessing of my life. The news was soon spread, and reached Palanty's ears: who procured a deadly sleeping draught, and, unsuspected by those about her, desperately swallowed it, and slept her last, leaving a paper on her toilet, with an account who she was, and her adventure with me.

This accident was soon told to my mother; who was lost in sorrow, till I assured her, Palanty had imposed on my ignorance by her habit until a few months before I dismissed her; and that by her artifice, and not my own inclination, I had been involved into this misfortune. As much a rake as I had been, I could not but have a secret aversion to a woman of that dissolute character. But the infamy of this tragical event has justly fallen on me, since in all my other intrigues I had been the seducer, and too often triumphed in the spoils of unguarded innocence.

The lovely Cimene, to whom I had been but two days married, instead of betraying any female weakness, with peace in her looks, and persuasion in her tongue, endeavoured to compose the grief and distraction with which she found this infamous event had filled my thoughts. In her calm and unruffled temper I saw the privilege of a spot-

less life, and a mind unclouded with guilt, free from uneasy reflections on what was past, or restless expectations of what was to come.

This is just the reverse of my condition. The unhappy end of this miserable woman, the double murder of herself and unborn infant, the share I have had in her misfortunes, has brought my former crimes in their blackest shape to my remembrance.

'Tis conscious guilt's the emphasis of hell,
Were all but fables, else, the priesthood tell.

Like furies, the ghosts of my past sins start up, and terrify my restless imagination; my debauches, quarrels, licentious amours, pass in a confused succession before me. This is what secretly blasts my joys, when, to the world, they appear in their full bloom.

It is not a month since my softest wishes were crowned in the possession of the charming Cimene; I am yet surrounded with the congratulations of my friends on the happy occasion; every other circumstance of life seems to conspire to my satisfaction. You will ask me, my Lord, why I am not easy and thankful in this circle of earthly enjoyments? What is the hinderance? Where is the obstacle?

It is guilt; it is conscious guilt! What was the matter with the first bold transgressor? Why did he run to the thickets to cover him? Why shelter himself among the trees of Eden? What could make him fly that gracious presence, at which innocent nature smiled, the new creation bloomed afresh, and the morning-stars rejoiced? Why is he fearful in the cool of the evening, who, at the dawning of the same day, knew no such passion? What has made this sudden alteration? Some mighty change must be within, for all without is the same. Is he not in paradise, surrounded with all the pleasures of sense? The warbling music of the groves delights his ear; to charm his sight, the gay creation unfolds its various beauties;
the

the flowers breathe ambrosial fragrance to cheer him ; the balmy air is yet unruffled by tempests, the sun shines in its original splendor, and nature stands dressed in all her primæval perfection ! The man is, in exact temperament, formed for immortality, and just warm from his great Creator's hands ; from whom, with wild amazement, now he flies, and seeks the covert of the woods for shelter.

This was all the effect of guilt, that secret wound that bleeds within ! You will excuse my dwelling so long on this melancholy theme, when I tell you it is some relief to that anguish which is a secret to all the world but your Lordship. I am well acquainted with your compassion and fidelity ; and am going to make a farther trial of them, by a relation which will surprise you. I will not exact your belief, nor enter into the reason and philosophy of it ; nor will I presume to contradict it, should you tell me I am distracted, that all I am going to discover is the effect of frenzy. As it was but a momentary appearance, I will assert nothing. But as I was indulging my melancholy temper, in the retreat of a summer-house, sitting very late in a pensive posture, leaning on a table, a pale sulphurous gleam of light appeared that seemed to hover round a form resembling Palantý's ; who, with a rueful aspect, dressed in the habiliments of the dead, stood before me, and, with an air of unutterable anguish, laid this letter on the table by me, and immediately vanished. I should think this no more than a dream, if the paper had not been real. The dreadful contents are as follows.

To Lyfander.

" I Am now convinced, by a terrible demonstration, of those truths I once denied. To my cost I find, that hell is no poetic fiction, no enthusiastic dream, nor pious fable of some mercenary priest. This was the language of my impiety, when I followed you in an impudent disguise ; and, to support my masculine

A a 2

" character,

“ character, acted the Atheist, by ridiculing all
“ that was sacred, till I was given up of Heaven
“ to the strongest delusion, and the most daring
“ infidelity.

“ Thus abandoned, I swallowed the deadly po-
“ tion, with a full presumption of mingling with
“ my native dust, and being insensible for ever.
“ But the instant death had closed my eyes, and
“ laid his icy hand on my heart, a scene altoge-
“ ther new and surprising opened before me. The
“ just unembodied soul, in the height of astonish-
“ ment, would fain have shrunk back again into its
“ late warm habitation, from whence I had vio-
“ lently forced it. The attempt was vain; the
“ avenues of mortal life were for ever shut, and I
“ found myself the derision of those malignant
“ spirits, who had been my seducers to this unna-
“ tural fact.

“ What execrations did I not utter against my-
“ self and them! I had indulged the rage, and
“ practised the language of hell in my mortal
“ state; but here all was fruitless and unfeared;
“ I was the captive of those infernal ministers,
“ who waited to conduct me to the frontiers of e-
“ ternal night. I cast my eyes to the heavenly lu-
“ minaries, and the full blazing sun, whose light
“ I was to lose for ever; I bid adieu to the fair
“ creation, whose almighty Former I had denied;
“ I cast my eyes to the sparkling gates of bliss,
“ and, with infinite anguish, found them shut a-
“ gainst me; and hurried far through chaos
“ and primæval darkness, (far from the limits of
“ celestial day), I reached my destined habitation;
“ a dismal region, waste and wide, of which no
“ mortal can form a conception, nor find a name
“ for half its terrors.

“ Oh! fly the paths that lead to these mourn-
“ ful abodes. As I have been, in my mortal state,
“ the instrument of hell to entice you to sin, your
“ perdition would vastly aggravate my own mise-
“ ry; and I am suffered to warn you, as the rich
“ libertine

"libertine in the gospel would have warned his
"brethren, that you come not to this place of
"torment.

"I must no farther reveal the secrets of the
"deep; but am commanded back to the seats of
"impenetrable night, and endless despair!

PALANTY."

That this letter was left on the table, writ in a
character exactly like Palanty's, is fact. Whether
the rest was real or imaginary, I dare not decide.

Your Lordship's, &c.

LYSANDER.

LETTER XI.

*Letter the second, To my Lord ———, from Ly-
sander.*

My Lord,

YOU are entirely at your liberty to reject the
relation I sent you. I never intended to make
your belief in ghosts and apparitions a test of
your Christianity. That stands on a more sure
foundation, and has all the evidence of reason and
miracles to support it. I am an instance of its di-
vine power, by which I am transformed from the
brutal to the human nature. I can now glory in
that privilege I lately despised, and, without va-
nity, claim the dignity of a reasonable creature.

My penitence was sincere, and found acceptance
from Heaven. The sacred illumination scattered
the gloom of guilt and despair, while in gentle
whispers the Eternal Spirit breathed pardon, peace,
and heavenly benedictions to my soul; I felt the
powerful influence, the flames of celestial love
were kindled, my fears vanished like clouds before
the morning-sun.

"All hail," I cried, "ye unknown delights,
"ye unexperienced pleasures! Compared to you,
"what are my past enjoyments! What are all the
"amusements of sense! I never lived till now;
"I knew no more than the name, the shadow of
"happiness;

"happiness ; but now I wake to life, and taste the
"joys of angels."

I hope, my Lord, you will not think these the flights of imagination. You that have always believed the articles of religion, and kept its bright rewards in view, can reflect on such subjects more calmly ; but to me these glorious truths are all novelty and surprise. If a wretch from his infancy had been kept in a gloomy dungeon, and just delivered from the dark confinement, with what transports would he salute the great luminaries of heaven, while one that from his birth had been blessed with their beams would meet them without emotion ?

These important subjects engage my whole attention ; the creation wears new beauties ; wherever I cast my eyes, I meet impressions of the Divinity ; I trace his footsteps among the silver rills, and invoke him in the silent grove. You know my poetic humour by too many loose compositions ; but my muse is now consecrated, and in some sylvan retreat often assists my evening-devotion. Permit me, my Lord, to repeat my last invocation to the heavenly power.

Descend, celestial Spirit, from above,
The uncreated source of light and love !
Perpetual calms, and sweet security,
Concord, and graceful order, wait on thee ;
Decay, and death, thy quick'ning rays exclude,
And springing nature smiles, by thee renew'd ;
Darkness, and wild confusion, soon retire
Before thy clear illuminating fire ;
To gentle thoughts thou dost our bosoms move,
And breath'st the soft melodious soul of love.

O thou who mad'st the new creation bloom
With active life, and quick'ning virtue come !
Come, like the silent fall of evening-dews,
Whose moisture all the flow'ry field renews ;
Breathe on me like the sweet Sabean gale,
That fans with rosy wings the verdant dale ;
Smooth as the gliding music, that controuls
Each human care, and steals upon our souls ;

In triumph with the heav'nly train descend
Of loves and graces, which on thee attend.
In silent shades, by some clear fountain's fall,
Thou oft hast answer'd to a mortal's call;
Oft in some artless cave, or humble cell,
Thou with the sons of men hast deign'd to dwell,
And left behind the high celestial seats,
To visit mortals, in their low retreats.
When holy vows thy kind descent invite,
Thou hear'st the gentle whispers with delight;
While Nature tir'd her midnight-sabbath keeps,
And ev'ry thought, but pure devotion, sleeps:
The smiling stars roll on, the dazzling moon
In pomp advances to her silent noon;
While thy sweet voice, soft as the midnight-air,
Dispels the gloom of ev'ry earthly care,
Unfolding boundless prospects of delight,
Before the piercing, intellectual sight.

Beneath the sacred mount, by thee inspir'd
The Hebrews glorious leader sat retir'd;
The new-made world, and Eden's blooming pride,
In various scenes before him lay descry'd.

O princely swain, how didst thou then despise
The Egyptian court, how worthless in thy eyes!
What were the grandeurs of that royal seat,
To the distinctions of thy present state!
While paradise, in all its charming views,
For thee, the great creating voice renews;
For thee, again, the morning-stars rejoice;
Again, for thee they raise the tuneful voice;
The sons of God touch the melodious lyre,
And all the wide creation join the choir.

Lead me, propitious Spirit, lead me far,
Where I no more the voice of man may hear:
You charming visions how you fire my soul,
And ev'ry thought of earthly things controul!
Thro' what enchanting paths, what flow'ry ways,
My fancy led, with boundless freedom strays!
Reveal'd the avenues of pleasure lie,
And open wide the crystal portals fly;
Immortal beauty smiles, angelic powers,
In soft responses, sing from rosy bowers.

You

You will not blame me, being got here, if I have no inclination to descend. But mortality will prevail. I sink to my native element again; where, as long as I am confined, believe me to be

Your Lordship's

Most obliged humble servant,

LYSANDER.

L E T T E R XII.

The sequel of the story of Rosella, in the last letter of the first part of Letters Moral and Entertaining.

WHEN I was in the west, four years since, I wrote you word, that I had made an acquaintance in a family who lived in a little retirement, at the foot of a hill, a few miles from my house. I then gave you an account of the piety and beauty of those exemplary recluses; and owned, that I had not at that time forgot the charms of Melissa: but I did not tell you, that they had made an impression on me, which could never be erased by all the modish schemes of interest and alliances. Nor could that darling (but mistaken) notion of liberty hold me out against the desire I had to call her mine, and make her so by the strongest and happiest ties, those of marriage. I struggled with my own heart, and would fain have terrified it by the laugh I should raise among my acquaintance, when they heard that I, in the gayest bloom of life, and with four thousand pounds a-year at my command, should leave all the fashionable maxims of mankind, and fall in love with a young woman, who had only beauty, and the sanctity of her manners, to recommend her. For though her birth is noble, she has only three thousand pounds, which I design to present to Honoria her mother, the day after our marriage; which will be solemnized as soon as my lawyer can finish a deed, by which I give Melissa a thousand pounds a-year rent-charge for her life, in case she should survive me.

Now

Now I have told you my happiness, I cannot help making you acquainted with Rosella's; whose story, you often said, touched you. I went to the house of Honoria the day after I came hither, (for now it was my only business); as soon as I alighted, a clean footman in a frock turned up with green, took my horse. I expected from this to find an alteration in the family; for when I was there first, they had no livery-servant. As soon as I came into the hall, I saw a beautiful young man, whose dress was entirely plain; his hair hung in natural curls without any powder, and his air and appearance seemed to suit with the simplicity and elegance of the other inhabitants of that happy dwelling. Rosella was sitting by a table, and had a boy of about fourteen months old in her lap, rosy and smiling as a cherubim, who was playing with some flowers with which Melissa was going to dress a bason. Rosella immediately rose; and, coming towards me, desired I would give her leave to present her husband Alonzo to me. I was rejoiced at the sound, and congratulated her upon the change of her fortune, in a manner that might convince her how sincerely I shared in all that related to her. The lovely Melissa seemed glad to see me, and ran to call Honoria with an obliging haste. After a few compliments were over, I inquired what had produced the alteration I saw. Honoria told me, that about two years and a half ago, Alonzo's father fell dangerously ill, and that he expressed an ardent desire to see his son: upon which his wife wrote to a nephew she had in London, (who was the most intimate friend Alonzo had upon earth), in hopes that he might possibly be acquainted with the place of his retreat; and begged of him, if he knew how to direct a letter, that he would write, and desire him to come and see his dying father. The nephew immediately dispatched an express to Alonzo, who was retired into a little village in Lancashire, where he boarded in the house of an old clergyman, who had no other fa-

mily than himself and his wife, and who were glad to have Alonzo with them, as he appeared a modest, sober young man ; for their circumstances were too plentiful to want the advantage of a boarder. He immediately left the old people, and came home about four days before the death of his father, who was transported at the sight of him, nor did he feel less joy, when his mother assured him, that Montanor (for that was his father's name) had for many months before his illness, lived a very penitent regular life.

As soon as I heard of Alonzo's return, I wrote him a letter, in which I desired to see him as soon as Montanor's funeral was over, but forbade him to come till that time. He complied with me in that request, as he has ever since done, in all that I desired of him. About six weeks after, Rosella and he were married. I begged him to let me enjoy the company of my daughter while I lived in this solitary habitation ; for I could not think of leaving it ; and we have passed our time ever since in the most perfect harmony. I cannot deny him the justice of acknowledging to his face, that we are not only happier in our retirement than we were before, by the addition of a cheerful companion, but edified and improved by the piety of his life. Alonzo seemed out of countenance at this part of her discourse ; and the modesty with which he received it, showed how much he deserved the praise she gave him. She continued to tell me, that about four months after he married Rosella, he received a letter from the lawyer in the village where he had boarded, to let him know, that a few weeks ago the clergyman with whom he had lived, had buried his wife, and about a fortnight after fell himself ill of the same fever, and died ; that he had by his will left Alonzo his estate, which was about a hundred and eighty pounds a-year, and two thousand pounds in money ; which added to about two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and some money which his father left him, makes their fortune very easy.

Here

Here Honoria ended her discourse; and it was so late, that they desired me to stay dinner. After which I asked to speak with her alone, and told her, I begged I might have leave to propose myself to Melissa, if her heart was not already engaged. Honoria assured me it was not, and seemed surprised at a proposal so much to Melissa's advantage: but told me, she begged I would endeavour to get Melissa's consent without her interposing her authority; since she could not resolve, even in so advantageous a thing, to force her inclination. When I named it to the young beauty, she did not at first seem averse to any thing but the leaving of her mother, which the smallness of her house would oblige her to. But, after a few days, the nearness of my house reconciled her to that scruple, and I had the joy to find, that inclination had a greater share than interest in her compliance. Rejoice with me, Lysander; my happiness in your alliance will not end at my death; the conversation I shall now enjoy, will fit me for eternal rewards. I will make no apology to you for the sallies of my pleasure, which will let me talk to you of nothing but my own affairs. Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

To Serena.

My dear Serena,

AS I have always made you the confident of what ever has related to me, I cannot help giving you an account of the pleasure and pain occasioned by an acquaintance I have made with a young woman since I came hither. She was only daughter to a man who had been formerly an officer in the English army; but quitted it in discontent, and came hither with Semanthe his daughter, to treat with some people about a project of working in some mines, which are believed to have many large veins of silver in them.

Semanthe came to see me upon my arrival. I found so much wit and good-nature in her conversation, that we contracted a great intimacy, and were continually together. She had every qualification that could make her company entertaining; she sung, played on the harpsichord, painted in water-colours, and had a surprising genius for poetry. Her sentiments on all subjects seemed just and noble. I thought myself the happiest person in the world, in finding a companion so instructive and agreeable.

She told me the story of her past life; which described in her charming language, still raised my esteem. In every occurrence I had the pleasure to find she practised the highest rules of justice and benevolence; and, though now in the early part of her life, she was guided by the nicest rules of virtue. By a passion she had for a person by whom she was equally beloved, I was confirmed of the prudence of her conduct; I found that no partiality or tenderness could tempt her to deviate from the severest principles of modesty and honour.

I was not at rest till I had poured out all the secrets of my heart to her; which I did without the least reserve; and trusted her with a secret of the greatest importance to my future tranquillity.— But what is human dependence!—I found the inmost secrets of my soul betrayed by the person in whom I had so entirely confided.—I knew not how to behave myself in this perplexity.—I had too much compassion for my fallen friend, to give her the pain and confusion of hearing my reproaches; and too much sincerity, to continue my intimacy with her: but, for my own security, I was forced to break off all further commerce with one of whose guilt I had the utmost certainty.

This is a very sensible affliction to me in a place where I have so few acquaintance, and am not in a temper to contract any new friendship. I could as soon have questioned my own existence, as Semanthe's truth; and now, though I cannot acquit her,

her, I am perpetually endeavouring to mitigate her crime. I tell my heart, her error did not proceed from any malignity in her nature; but a too great confidence in some other friend; that she, as well as I, had been deceived, and only told my secrets where she thought she might safely have trusted her own. I am ready to melt into tears whenever I think of her, and find more compassion than anger on reflecting on her conduct. Though I no longer converse with her, it is more to make her sensible of her guilt, in betraying a trust of importance, than to shew my own resentment. I shall be for ever interested in her welfare; and if my prayers have any force, she will live to wear off every failing that can cast a blemish on a mind capable of arriving at as great a degree of perfection as human nature is capable of.

I have wrote myself into too melancholy a humour to say any more, but that I am

Yours,

ISABELLA.

LETTER XIV.

From Melinda, giving an account of her concealment.

My dear Oriana,

I Told you, before I left my brother's house, that you should hear from me as soon as I was settled, and that I would inform you of the reason of my flight. You have too much candour and charity to judge harshly of my proceedings; which, could you see my heart, you would rather pity than condemn me for.

You have often, within these two last years, observed an alteration in my temper and person. I am no more the sprightly florid creature that you used to call the emblem of health and cheerfulness. You saw the change, but did not guess the cause was a secret, hopeless passion. I was at a play: I saw there one of the most agreeable persons in the world.

world. His dress, his behaviour, every thing was graceful and easy. The tragedy of Cato was acted: He was attentive, and seemed to enter into every noble sentiment, where either the hero or lover was described. His aspect wore the visible characters of fortitude and virtue. He stood up between the acts, and turned towards the box where I sat; and when I went out, he made way for me through the crowd. But I never after saw him in any public place, nor knew who nor what he was. But the charming youth had made an impression on my thoughts, which had soon a very happy effect. I grew weary of the noisy tumultuous way of living in my brother's house, and refused sharing in the constant round of diversions that my sister loved. Nor could there be any thing more dissolute and extravagant than the manners of this family; assemblies, balls, gaming,—all sorts of riots and licentiousness. I never indeed approved these entertainments; and was always uneasy, without knowing how to make myself otherwise.

The paths to happiness that religion proposed, I was as ignorant of as the savage Americans in their native groves. Dumain, who married my sister, was a professed libertine. My parents left me very young to their care, my sister being many years older than I am: and if my godfathers and godmothers, instead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world for me in my baptism, had solemnly vowed I should be bred in the midst of those snares and seducing temptations, they could not more effectually have discharged their trust, than by placing me in this family; whose Sunday's amusement was cards; for we never went to church, unless in a frolic, to spend an idle hour in whispering or laughing.

However, my guardian-angel did not quit his charge; but by the impression of a virtuous love, fortified my soul from every loose inclination. I fled diversions, grew fond of retirement. This
soon

soon gave me a habit of thinking : and, if I had schemes of happiness, they were all in some future life beyond the grave ; but my notions were clouded and imperfect. Indeed I believed there was a God, and the reproaches of my own reason taught me to fear him : but I had never looked into the Bible since I learned to read ; and was as ignorant of Christianity, as a young Hottentot bred in a cave.

My pensive temper now detested vanity, in every appearance. Plays and novels no more diverted me. But wanting something to read, I saw a Bible in the room, where my sister's woman lay ; and opening it, my attention was immediately engaged. The history was new to me. I carried it to my chamber ; but how was I surprised, to find the life and precepts of the great Founder of the Christian faith so different from the manners and principles of those who assumed that sacred profession ! I found myself in the flowery paths of ruin, nor knew how to extricate myself from the fatal snare. This was the secret language of my soul, to that invisible Power which knew its sincerity :

Thou Ruler of the sky, almighty Name,
 Whole piercing eye discerns my rising thoughts,
 Ere they are form'd within my anxious breast ;
 Thou seest my soul struggling to break the bands,
 Which thus detain her captive to the earth :
 Thou seest how vainly she would soar on high ;
 Passion and pleasure clog her downy wing,
 Prevent her flight, and sink her to the dust :
 There low she lies, and trembling begs thy aid,
 Conscious how impotent she is without thee.

My sister soon perceived the alteration of my temper, and used her art to engage me in some criminal diversion ; but in vain : I was sick and tired of these extravagancies. But what could I do ? My fortune was lost in the South sea ; I was dependent on Dumain's and my sister's charity ; and to heighten my distress, I was importuned by
 my

my Lord ———, (who was lately married), to yield to his criminal passion. At this proposal I started with horror, but could not shun his address, without quitting this disorderly family; which I resolved to do, and cast myself on the protection of Heaven.

I left my brother's house just after dinner, and went in a hackney-coach to a woman in the city that had been my nurse. I engaged her to secrecy, and got her to enquire for a place in some merchant's family. She soon succeeded, and introduced me to the wife of an East-India merchant, who lived in great splendor. My business was to wait on her in the station of a chamber-maid. She was very handsome, modest, and unaffected. The orders of the family were so regular and peaceful, so perfectly the reverse of my brother's, that I thought myself in another world, and among a new set of beings. Temperance and sobriety reigned amidst the height of plenty and liberality. The rooms were noble, and furnished with all the riches of the Indian world, and looked like the palace of some eastern monarch.

I found myself perfectly at ease. Dressing my mistress was all I had to do; which was a very agreeable employment, and soon dispatched. She had something so genteel in her manner, that every thing looked graceful and becoming on her, and cost but little trouble to make it fit well. Her conversation was innocent and instructive; her hours spent in reading, or some little amusement with her needle, without the least inclination to rambling after balls or masquerades.

I spent two or three weeks in this regular manner; my mistress treating me almost on a level. I had not yet seen my master, who now returned from his country-house. But, my dear Oriana, think what was my affliction, when I discovered that he was the same lovely youth I had seen at the play. As soon as he saw me, he turned as red as crimson, and I as pale as ashes. He passed by me, and went immediately into my mistress's room. It

was

was almost two years since I had seen him, and I had some hopes I was forgot. However, I resolved to quit the family, if I found he knew me, or that my friendship for his wife did not extinguish my passion.—On my master's part, I soon found reason to be easy. I hardly ever saw him; he was either at the Exchange, or when at home, engaged in a series of beneficent actions. His wealth was immense, which he dispersed with an unequalled generosity. He assisted honest traders, that had but a small stock, paid the debts of prisoners, relieved the widow, and redressed the injured and oppressed. This was every day's business; which yet never intrenched on his hours of devotion, in private or public.

I now grew easy. A man of this character was not like to indulge a guilty flame in his own breast, or to flatter it in mine; besides, his absence would soon relieve me; for he intended to go to the Indies with the fleet, which was to set sail within a month.

The time was now expired. The day before he went his voyage, after he had been an hour with my mistress, in some private conversation, he left her, and came directly into my room, with such an air of benignity in his face, as some heavenly minister would wear, who brought a message of peace.

He began: "You will be surprised, Madam, to find I know your family, and the reason you have put yourself into the protection of mine. The first sight I had of you at the play, made an impression, which was never effaced, till I gave my vows to the best of wives. It is with some confusion I own the wrong I did your virtue, when I tell you nothing should have prevented my pursuit of the passion you first raised, but the scandal of the house you was in; which was so extravagant, that it forbade me ever thinking of you. But I now do you entire justice, and admire that triumph of honour, that put you in a station so low, to secure yourself

“ from the temptation of returning to your brother. I have left you ten thousand pounds in bank-bills; and have told your case (as I had it from the woman that nursed you) to my wife, who has all the virtues that ever adorned the sex. She yielded to this proposal with transport, and waits while I am gone to deliver the bills.” He said this, and left me without time or language to speak my gratitude.

My mistress immediately came into the chamber, with goodness shining in her eyes, and gave me the bank-bills, with a grace which only virtue can stamp on human actions. She prevented my thanks, by making an apology for her ignorance of my quality, assuring me, the house was entirely at my command; and that the hopes of my staying with her was the greatest satisfaction she proposed in her dear Henry’s absence. I could not possibly discover my sense of this surprising benefit, by all the force of language.—My silence, and the tenderness into which she saw my soul was melted, was the only evidence of gratitude I could now give.

In the morning, when every thing was ready for the parting of the East-India fleet, my generous benefactor came into his wife’s chamber, to take his last adieu. I was with her, endeavouring to give that consolation myself wanted. Her grief drew some reluctant tears from him, while he endeavoured to conceal the inward anguish. The hero and the lover appeared in his behaviour. And when, to excuse the intemperance of her sorrow, his wife urged the dangers of the seas, and the rage of barbarous nations on the shore; I shall never forget with what an air of greatness he replied, *Je crains Dieu, et je n’ai point d’autre crainte*:—“I fear God, and have no other fear.” Thus undaunted would the God-like man have appeared, had he seen the stars falling from their orbs, and heard the sound of the last thunders. When he had, with an apparent regret, freed himself from the embraces of his wife, with a look of compassion,

compassion, like that of some pitying angel, he bid me farewell. His domestics were lost in grief; the passage from his house was crowded with his grateful dependents, whose wrongs or necessities had been redressed by him. A thousand ardent prayers for his prosperity reached the skies, and gained the divine assent; while he hastened through the admiring throng, distressed with the popular applause.

How poor a figure is that of a libertine, in his most glittering heights of vanity, compared to this great man, who has so early begun his race of glory, and is in the very bloom of youth mature in every virtue! Instead of passing his hours in a train of idle amusements, the gay part of his life is devoted to Heaven, and the public welfare.—
You know where to find

Your humble servant,

MELINDA.

LETTER XV.

To Eusebius.

AS my reformation is partly owing to that exalted notion of virtue your example gave me, it is one of the greatest satisfactions I have, to express the sense of that immense obligation, by unfolding the most secret recesses of my soul to you.

I cannot but communicate my content, while every view my thoughts take heightens my happiness. I look back on the stormy ocean, the tumult and perplexity of my life past, and bless the gracious power that saved me on the very edge of perdition. When I look forward, my expectations are all bright and unbounded.

I bid my soul take its ease, banish every care, and act, without restraint, the glorious prodigal. I survey my vast possession, lose my wishes in endless plenty, and give up all my powers to indolence and joy. I look to the stars, count the hea-

venly glories, and call the treasures of eternity my own.

Let chaos come again ; be the gay creation lost in darkness, and the fair face of nature become a universal blank ; let her beauties fade, and those divine characters she wears be effaced ; I shall yet be happy. When the groves shall no more renew their verdure, nor the valleys boast their flowery pride,——when the sun is extinguished in the skies, and all the æthereal lamps have burnt out their golden flames,——when the commissioned angel shall lift his hand on high, and swear by the unutterable name——That time shall be no more,——when these transitory images of things for ever take their flight, I shall explore the worlds of life and pleasure, and triumph in the plenitude of bliss.

Then shall the celestial arcana be unveiled, and the heaven of heavens disclose their glories ; the ineffable Divinity shall shew the milder beauties of his face, and manifest as much of his excellence, as created intellects can support. But what angel's wing has measured the height of his throne ; who has entered those sacred recesses, where he dwells in himself, possessed of unbounded bliss ? Has the ocean of joy been fathomed, or the limits of independent felicity described ? Who has found access to the inmost habitations of the Most High, and gazed on essential glory ; before whose fainter emanations the angelic splendors are eclipsed, the thrones and principalities of light disappear.

What path is found to those sublime retreats,
Where Pleasure banquets in its regal seats,
Where Beauty triumphs in her native bow'r,
Uncopy'd yet by the creating pow'r ?
Ten thousand various forms, divinely fair,
Sparkle in their supreme ideas there ;
While wisdom, with superior order, shines
In boundless schemes, and infinite designs :
Wondrous the prospect, clear, and unconfin'd,
But open only to th' Eternal Mind.

What

What tow'ring intellect, with daring flight,
Has made excursion through these realms of light;
The blest'd recesses, where th' approachless God,
From all duration, made his high abode?

Whoe'er has mark'd, with bold enquiring eyes,
From whence the secret springs of life arise;
How from their deep exhaustless source they flow,
To actuate heaven, and cheer the world below?

Those dazzling habitations who has found,
Where Love, in all his heav'nly charms, sits
crown'd?

Great Love, th' Almighty Father's first delight,
His image, and the darling of his sight;
The full resemblance of the Deity,
Who all his glorious image stamp'd on thee;
'Twas thou who didst his boundless thoughts em-
ploy,

His sole complacence, his peculiar joy,
From ages unbegun——But who can tell
Thy generation, and thy birth reveal?
What thought can measure back the long extent
Of nameless times, and speak thy great descent?
Before the hills appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Or golden flames in the blue æther glow'd;
Before the vast creation had a name,
Thou wast in bliss and dignity the same,
By thee the sun, by thee the stars were made;
The spacious skies at thy command were spread;
The heav'n of heav'ns, the empyrean coasts,
Were form'd by thee, with all their num'rous hosts;
Angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, pow'rs,
Who sing thy conquests in th' immortal bow'rs.
For thou dost ev'ry heav'nly breast inflame,
And loud *Victoria's* answer to thy name:
Their beings and their bliss they owe to thee,
Thou equal offspring of the Deity!
His perfect image thou dost justly prove;
For all the bright Divinity is Love.

You find, in whatever character I act, whether
the saint or the libertine, love is the animating
motive, the leading principle. But how superior
are

are my prospects! how glorious the hopes that now fire my soul, to the trifling ends I had lately in view! My desires terminate in nothing below infinite excellence, and unbounded felicity. Adieu.

L E T T E R XVI.

The story of Olinda and Sophronia.

[Translated from Tasso's Jerusalem, book 2.]

THE king was now with martial cares oppress'd,
When curs'd Ismenes thus his lord address'd.

"To share your fate, great Sir, I left my cell,
"And bring you all th' assisting force of hell:
"Th' infernal spirits subject to my will,
"With eager speed, my strict commands fulfil;
"By them inform'd, this method I propose,
"To guard the fortress, and insult your foes.
"Beneath a temple which the Christians own,
"Descends a vault, to all but them unknown:
"Within the awful consecrated ground
"An image of the virgin-mother's found;
"Perpetual lamps before the wondrous maid
"Are lighted up, and fragrant incense laid.
"This statue, Sir, by your own hands convey'd
"From thence, must be in Macon's temple laid;
"Secur'd by spells, while that does safe remain,
"Godfrey shall storm the fated town in vain."

This said, th' impatient king directs his pace,
With impious fury, to the holy place;
Nor to profane the sacred pavement fears,
But madly thence the beauteous image bears.
Then in his god's polluted seat 'twas laid,
While o'er it ev'ry charm the wizzard said.

But when in heav'n the next gay morning shone,
Its guardian finds the sacred treasure gone;
Searches in vain; then with a thousand fears,
Distracted, to the court, the tidings bears.

The prince, his Christian subjects first suspects,
And all his flaming rage at them directs:

But

But whether human hands the work had done,
Or power divine, to men was yet unknown.
The curs'd enchanter mutters o'er his spells,
Yet nothing by the hellish art reveals;
Each house was ransack'd to its last retreat,
But no success th' enrag'd inquirers met.
" 'Tis then resolv'd," the raving monarch cries,
" I'll doom them all one gen'ral sacrifice ;
" The guiltless with th' unknown offender falls ;
" A fact like this for speedy vengeance calls."

This cruel sentence reach'd the Christians ears :
Their sudden fate unusual horror wears.
No dawning hope of safety was in sight,
No method of defence, or secret flight :
Nor dare they mercy from the tyrant crave ;
Their last and desp'rate refuge was the grave.
But Heav'n, which ne'er abandons the distress'd,
Provides them succour, where they hop'd it least.

A beauteous virgin liv'd, but liv'd unknown,
Amidst the concourse of the noisy town ;
A lively bloom adorn'd her charming face,
An artless softness and persuasive grace.
To this advantage fav'ring Heav'n had join'd
The richer blessing of a noble mind.
With pious thoughts, and sacred zeal inspir'd,
From all the world she would have liv'd retir'd ;
But envious Love the chaste design forbid,
Nor suffer'd so much merit to be hid ;
A youthful vot'ry to her guiltless eyes,
His fatal pow'r had doom'd a sacrifice :
One creed, one holy faith, they both confess'd,
In one pure form were both their pray'rs address'd ;
The youth as modest as his mistress fair,
With awful silence still conceal'd his care ;
And still the lovely author of his pains
A stranger to his am'rous grief remains ;
His cares and services were all unpaid,
Nor once regarded by the wary maid.

The Christians danger now had reach'd her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand growing fears.
At last, some gen'rous stratagem she sought,
How, by her own, their safety might be bought.

But

But shame, and female fear, th' attempt restrain,
And render all her great intentions vain ;
Till bolder hope her first design renews,
Which bravely now the steadfast maid pursues.

She pass'd the crowded streets with sober pace,
Nor strove to veil, nor yet expose her face ;
Downward her eyes with modest looks incline,
And with a nice engaging coyness shine ;
Her charming air, her easy mien and dress,
Nor art, nor perfect negligence confess :
Admir'd of all, the thoughtful beauty pass'd,
And met the wild disorder'd king at last :
" Great Sir," she then began, " the Christians spare,
" And I th' unknown offender will declare."

A decent boldness lighten'd in her eyes,
Whose piercing lustre ev'ry heart surprise :
The vanquish'd monarch stood confus'd and
charm'd,

His visage alter'd, and his rage disarm'd :
Ev'n love had enter'd, but th' imperious fair
Attack'd his soul by methods too severe ;
Not frowns, nor coy foreboding beauty move,
But gentle smiles indulge the flame of love :
Yet, if not love, amazement and delight,
Her charms within his doubtful breast excite.
He paus'd, and thus—" Let me the secret share,

" The people's lives, at thy request, I'll spare."

" From first to last," she cries, " the bold design,
" The great attempt and daring action's mine."
And thus, by an heroical deceit,
Her life abandon'd for the public fate.

Again inquir'd the yet suspending king,
" Who was thy curs'd adviser in the thing ?"
Th' undaunted maid replies, " The whole design,
" Contriv'd, resolv'd, and execute, is mine ;
" The danger, the fatigue, was mine alone ;
" The guilt and glory shall be all my own."
Enrag'd, the tyrant then replies,—" And all
" My vengeance on thy wretched head shall fall."
" 'Tis just," she calmly said, " and I'm content ;
" Th' illustrious action mine, mine be the punishment.

" But,

“ But, Sir, your anxious searches are in vain
 “ The violated image to regain ;
 “ For nothing but its ashes now remain ;
 “ This way secur’d, that by no Pagan-hand
 “ The holy shrine might be again profan’d.
 “ Demand no more, my Lord ; enough is known ;
 “ The action I both justify and own.”

Her daring language, and relentless air,
 No more the wild, outrageous King could bear ;
 No more his swelling fury could restrain ;
 Her youth, her pow’rful beauty, plead in vain :
 Nor interceding love his rigour tames :
 The pity’d virgin sentenc’d to the flames,
 Whom thence (yet with compassion and remorse)
 The murm’ring Pagans in a tumult force.
 Her hands are bound, her modest face unveil’d,
 No more its charms from vulgar eyes conceal’d.
 Though void of fear her doubtful looks confess
 A soft concern, and human tenderness :
 The rosy blush, that from her visage flies,
 Not paleness, but a snowy white supplies.

Mean time the wond’rous accident was known
 From street to street, thro’ all the swarming town.
 The person doubtful, the relation true,
 Among the rest, Olinda thither drew :
 Too soon the wretched youth approach’d, and
 found

By impious hands, his charming mistress bound ;
 Distracted now among the guards he press’d,
 And thus aloud th’ astonish’d king address’d.

“ Ah ! Royal Sir, yourself no more deceive,
 “ Nor this fond maid’s invented tale believe.
 “ Could she, alas ! the cautious watch betray,
 “ And from its seat the weighty shrine convey ?
 “ ’Tis fiction all ;——the enterprise was mine,
 “ Nor will I thus a glorious fate resign.”

He adds, “ Your temple down a sloping way,
 “ Receives the light, and draws the beamy day ;
 “ Through that I stole the sacred prize away ;
 “ My Lord, the sentenc’d criminal you see ;
 “ These chains, this cruel death, belongs to me.”

D d

“ And

" And could not then a single life suffice,
 " Unhappy youth ?" the fair Sophronia cries,
 With kindling love, and pity in her eyes,
 " What rage, what fury mov'd thee to expose,
 " Thyself a victim to relentless foes ?
 " What tears, what mean reluctance have I
 shown,

" That you believe I cannot die alone !"

But nothing could her kind repulses gain ;
 Unshaken still, his first designs remain :
 With stedfast courage each despises life,
 And long between them held the gen'rous strife ;
 Virtue, and mighty Love, dispute the field,
 And neither in the friendly contest yield.

The tyrant raves, nor longer now refrains,
 But both one cruel punishment ordains :
 Commission'd soon, the charming youth they bind
 With heavy chains, and to the stake confin'd.

" Are these," he cries, " the fetters love prepares ?

" This the reward of all my tender cares ?

" With softer thoughts I fed my fond desires,

" And hop'd to meet thee, in more gentle fires.

" Yet could I, falling in thy tender arms,

" Expire, my death had still a thousand charms ;

" Could I receive thy parting sighs, and join,

" At the last fatal gasp, my lips with thine ;

" Our souls united, then to heav'n should fly,

" And I content, my charming fair should die."

" Far other cares," she mildly said, " than these,

" Olinda, should our serious minds possess,

" Lament thy sins, contemplate the reward

" For faith, and humble penitence, prepar'd :

" The palm, the starry crown, and martyr's due,

" With all the boundless raptures that ensue :

" Survey the sun, survey the dazzling sky ;

" To those bless'd regions we must shortly fly."

Of gods and men the Pagans murmur'd loud,
 The Christians, silent, weep among the crowd.
 The king, nor could his pity be disguis'd,
 A strange, unusual tenderness surpris'd ;

He durst no more the moving object view ;
But fix'd, and scorning to relent, withdrew ;
Sophronia, unconcern'd, alone appears,
Nor in the universal sorrow shares.

The mournful officers had plac'd, the while,
And now were lighting up the smoky pile ;
When a young champion, with a martial grace,
And lofty mien, approach'd the fatal place ;
A tygress on her plummy helmet shone,
Which, for the fair Clarinda made her known :
Her sex's nicer ornaments she fled,
In toilsome arms, to great achievements bred :
Her hands the labour of the loom refuse,
Nor in a closet could her mind amuse ;
But o'er the fields in savage spoils array'd,
Or through the woods, with fearless thoughts, she
stray'd.

When yet a child the fiery steed she rein'd,
Challeng'd the race, or wrestled on the sand ;
Vast desarts, hills, and pathless wilds she trac'd,
When with her spear the foaming boar she chac'd.
From Persia now the blooming warrior came,
To win new trophies of immortal fame ;
In battles past her sword had oft compell'd
The scatter'd Gauls to quit the bloody field :
Majestic charms, which ev'ry heart surprise,
And awful glories sparkle in her eyes.

Arriving here, prepar'd for death, she found
The tender youth and lovely virgin bound,
The feeble sex to heav'n her eyes address'd
And in her looks a silent calm express'd ;
The other grieves, and melts in pitying tears,
Not for his own unhappy fate, but her's.
The warlike nymph for both compassion proves,
But most her care the silent suff'rer moves.
She to the people turns, nor loses time,
Demands with haste, and hears in brief their crime ;
Intreats the execution they'd delay,
And helps herself the rising flames to stay ;
Then charg'd,—“ Let none this office undertake,
“ Till from the king I send them orders back.”

Her bold commands the willing crowd obey;
 She, to the court directed, speeds away,
 And audience gain'd, begins,—“ Great Prince,
 from far

“ Th’ unknown Clarinda comes, with you to share
 “ The toils and hazards of the hostile field;
 “ A volunteer to your commands I yield,
 “ Whether to meet the battle on the plain,
 “ Or at the walls the breaches to maintain.”

The king replies, “ Who has not heard thy fame?
 “ What distant climes are strangers to thy name?
 “ Thy deeds, illustrious virgin, spread thy praise,
 “ Where’er the wand’ring sun reveals his rays.
 “ Assisted thus we Godfrey’s arms defy,
 “ By thee secur’d of certain victory;
 “ To thy command our forces we resign;
 “ The war, and all its glorious conduct’s thine.”

Her modest thanks the graceful maid express’d,
 And thus again her gen’rous suit address’d.

“ Unusual it is, I know, my Lord, and hard
 “ For service unperform’d, to ask reward;
 “ But, by your royal clemency assur’d,
 “ I boldly beg, of quick success secur’d.
 “ Reverse, great Sir, the sentenc’d lover’s doom;
 “ An act like this your bounty will become.”
 “ Nothing was e’er,” the vanquish’d king reply’d,
 “ To such a fair petitioner deny’d:
 “ Their lives, heroic maid, your purchase be;
 “ Guilty, or innocent, I set them free.”

L E T T E R XVII.

*From Bel’amour, relating the sequel of his passion for
 Almeda, in the eighth letter of the first part of Let-
 ters Moral and Entertaining.*

My dear Carlos,

I Am pleased to find, that neither the gaiety of
 your humour, nor your own successful amours,
 have made you insensible to the misfortunes of
 your friend. Your compassion is some relief; for

I am really past jesting ; and raillery, in this case, would have been inhuman.

You may remember, in my last letter, I had some hopes the discovery of my inclinations for Almeda would prevail with Elvira to free me from the engagement I made to my father to marry her. But I was disappointed. All the art and eloquence I employed to paint the height of my passion for her rival, had just the contrary effect. Instead of raising her anger and resentment, it melted her into a tenderness, of which I had never thought her capable. At last she told me, though she would not suffer her tongue so far to belie the sentiments of her heart as to refuse me, yet I might refuse to marry her, if I knew how to dispense with my obligations to a dying father.

The naming my father gave a pious emotion to my soul, and awakened all the filial gratitude and veneration due to his memory. I am no libertine. Virtue and vice are with me real distinctions. I dare not violate my word to the meanest of my dependents, nor even to my worst enemy. Honour and conscience have hitherto governed my secret actions. I felt the force of Elvira's words, and left her without making any reply.

But how am I embarrassed ! If I had never seen the charming Almeda, I must have been unhappy. Elvira has been, from her infancy, bred up with my sisters. My affection for her has been always the same as for them ; and seems the tie of nature, not of choice. In all the little freedoms of conversation, I have treated her with the same decency as if she stood in that relation. Destiny seemed to have set some sacred bounds between us, that it would have been criminal to violate. This sentiment is so habitual to my thoughts, that I could as soon commit incest, and break in one all the sanctity of Nature's laws, as fall in love with Elvira. She is handsome enough ; so are my sisters, I love her, as I do them, with a very pure and innocent affection. Her charms have never kindled one soft desire in my breast rather a religious
horror

horror would seize me in addressing her. She is as secure from my attempts, as if an angel stood visibly before me to guard her virtue.

In this situation, imagine, if you can, how miserable I must be with this legacy of a wife. She brings a vast fortune, you will tell me: but, my dear Carlos, could she bring me both the Indies, it could be no relief to my domestic chagrin. I am no rake. Nor could you propose any fashionable liberty but what would heighten my uneasiness. Yet I dare not reflect on my father. It was not avarice that governed him, but rather compassion for a young orphan committed to his care. However I suffer, be his memory unblemished, and the sacred remains undisturbed by my complaints.

But the crisis of my misery is yet untold. Almeda is fixed to her cruel resolution of seeing me no more. To what cave, what desert, what unfrequented place she has retired, I cannot find; but she is certainly eloped from mortal men, and escapes all my inquiries. However, she has favoured me with the inclosed letter since her retreat; which I have sent, to justify the height of my passion; by which you will see the beauty of her mind is equal to that of her charming person. I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

BELLAMOUR.

To Bellamour.

I Had not the least intention ever to write to you more, or put you in mind there was such a person in the world as Almeda, had not your distresses reached me. And your endeavours to find me out, obliged me to assure you the search is in vain. I am determined never to see you more. And this shall be the last letter you will ever receive from me; which I write purely for your consolation, if an account of my quiet will be any to you.

From the moment you told me my happiness depended on Elvira's refusing you, I dismissed every

every flattering hope. I was sensible she knew too well how to distinguish merit, and how rarely such excellency as yours is to be met with. To resign you to the possession of another, to conquer the warmest wishes, and find happiness in giving pleasure to those we love, abstracted from ourselves, is a refinement few people are capable of, and what I did not expect from Elvira. She is conscious of her own superior charms, and may reasonably hope to gain your heart; whilst her esteem for you would not suffer her to let you dispose of yours to a person, who, in the common views of mankind, is unworthy of you.

Oh! why did Fate throw you in my way? Was it only to awaken me from my stupid negligence of the world to a sense of sorrow? to shew me a glimpse of happiness, only to make me more sensible of my indigence? Had your part in life been to act the dependent, and mine the advanced station, you had been left to me in quiet; nobody would have disputed my right: and I should have found more, much more pleasure in rewarding such merit, than I should have done now in sharing your fortune. But why do I expostulate with Heaven, who, no doubt allotted me into this sphere of life, as most suitable for me? It is in our own power to make the incidents of human life good or evil. It is our own minds that constitute them either. The reception they meet with there, and the turn they take, gives them their proper tincture. Let us not disturb the wise œconomy, but submit to the methods of Providence. You have obeyed your father in the disposal of your person to Elvira: let her have your mind also. It is her right. I will confess it is. There only I could envy her happiness; and it is there her delicacy could never endure a rival. Let us not be just by halves. May the same generous spirit, that carried you through the first marks of your obedience, animate you through all the offices of the most exalted virtue. I leave you, that I may be no obstacle to it; and beg you to consider, whatever faults

faults you commit to Elvira, I am the occasion: and while I fly from all commerce with you, to preserve my innocence, you will frustrate my endeavours, and make me guilty.

There is a pleasure in our very sorrows, when they flow for a worthy object. You can give me that pleasure, and justify me to myself; and by those very virtues that tear you from me, bind me faster to you, and give me a vanity in you.

Your happiness will be mine. I will not tell you, that I can forget you. It is impossible. The roses must forget to bloom, the birds to warble from the beach, the gay creation be undressed, and I insensible to perfection, ere your image can be erased out of my heart, or it can receive any other impression. A heart that has been your prize, cannot descend to a meaner sacrifice. No; the passion you have inspired suits the grandeur of your exalted genius, and must have the same duration with your virtue. I retire from the world, not to avoid, but to enjoy you more at liberty. We are never absent from those we love. Every beauty that nature can produce, brings you to my thoughts, since you have pointed out all their various charms to me, taught me how to relish solitude, and direct my mind to entertainments above the reach of fortune.

That sentiment of tenderness I have for you, has some emanation of divinity upon it, while it naturally leads me to the contemplation of the supreme Excellence, and directs my devotions to the Fountain of Beauty. Those hopes and fears which alternately elevate or depress the mind in all human expectations, vanish. The soul is at liberty to pursue the interest of another life; raises its thoughts above this little scene of things, to fairer, future worlds; breaks off the fetters that chain it to this world, and smiles through her prison, with a holy impatience on the joys of immortality. There all human distinctions will be lost, and gold will have nothing to do in the setting of them.

Perhaps

Perhaps the gay world will pity me, and think religion and a cell but a melancholy recourse : but I shall not find it so, while I am not secluded from the generous Monimia's cheering eye. Her delicate and blameless sensibility of human passions, (she to whom suffering is a merit), softens every care, and mingles every joy. While she descends from the height of grandeur to the gentle offices of the sincere friend, she forgets every advantage of fortune, till virtue in distress calls for her aid. Her titles have no energy with her, but when they give her a privilege of doing good ; and then she exerts them to their full force. She feels they cannot buy freedom to the mind, and that no calamity will retire in respect to them. Fate has so ordered it, that there is some similitude in our destinies, which reconciles me to mine ; while she recommends piety and resignation with the strongest and most beautiful arguments, her own example ; and fortifies my mind, by putting every virtue, by her own practice, in the most amiable light. Sometimes she sings a *requiem* to our sorrows, soothes them to peace with the most harmonious numbers ; and I have the ease of seeing my thoughts expressed in hers with every elegance : and when the serious soul exerts itself, she anticipates heaven, and gives a sweet foretaste of the songs of angels. Thus we baffle disappointment, and elude our sufferings. Honours, wealth, and beauty, stand abashed to see themselves despised ; while devotion claps her wings at this her fairest triumph.

You will, I hope, from what I have said, be satisfied I am not unhappy : and take this last assurance from me, that I can never be so whilst you are blessed. You have annihilated every sense of sorrow in me. I have no tears, but when you claim them.

Adieu.

L E T T E R XVIII.

To Lady Mary, from her sister, just before her death.

“ **I** Come, ye ghosts; prepare your roseate
 “ bow’rs,
 “ Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow’rs.
 “ Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
 “ Where flames refin’d in breasts seraphic glow.”
 POPE.

This, my dear sister, is my long, my final adieu, till we meet in happier regions. The springs of life are running low, and nature, tired with human changes, longs to be at rest. The grave attends me, that mansion of silence and repose.

I soon shall close my weary eyes in peace,
 And stretch compos’d upon my dusty bed.
 Oh death! thy quiet and refreshing shade
 Shall yield a long, an unmolested rest,
 From all the fruitless toil and vanity
 That dwells below the sun:—

I have had an ill state of health for some years, and have lately had two fits of an apoplexy. The third, my physician is so sincere to let me know will be fatal. I am now indisposed, and find some certain symptoms of its return; which makes me resolve to unburden my soul of its last pressure.

Forgive me, ye injured shades of my great ancestors, nor blot my name from your illustrious line!—My dear sister, can your rigid virtue forgive my fault, and plead my defence to my injured husband, when I am silent in the dust? Dear Lady Mary, will you not pardon a crime which is blotted out by Heaven? With that my peace is made by a long course of temperance. Weeks, and months, and years, are past since the date of my guilt. The rising and the setting sun has been a constant witness to my devo-
 tions;

tions; the moon and the midnight-stars were conscious to my tears.

It is, as you know, sixteen years since I was married to Count Edgar. I have had two sons and three daughters. But shall I own this shameful truth! the eldest of the two brothers is not his. On a fatal night (let the horror of darkness cover it) I was, in my husband's absence, by the Marquis de —, seduced. It was not the contrivance of a formal amour, but the effect of inadvertency and surprise. Oh! where was my guardian angel in that loose moment, that interval of reproach and madness!

The subject is too infamous for me to enter into particulars. But I have full assurance this youth is not the count's son; though his confidence in me, with his easy temper, kept him from ever making the least inquiry into any circumstance of my guilt. He has lately made his will; and to the eldest brother (being his greatest favourite) given his whole estate, leaving the rest entirely dependent on this son, which, to my confusion, is not his own.

This secret, dear Lady Mary, I must entreat you to discover to Count Edgar after my death, that he may do his own children justice, and only provide moderately for the other. Assure him, that it was only in this instance I ever wronged my fidelity to him. This is the utmost reparation I can make; and, with a mind unburdened, I now cast myself on infinite mercy, and smile in the view of death.

I come, ye ministers of fate, I come.
 But while I pass the intervening gloom,
 Should rising doubts my trembling heart invade,
 With music cheer the melancholy shade.
 In soothing strains a gentle *requiem* sing,
 And touch, with heav'nly art, the golden string.
 The charming sound shall ev'ry care beguile,
 And make the seats of desolation smile.
 My soul, prepar'd by sacred ecstasy,
 Shall learn, and join the choros of the sky.

Once more, my dear sister, adieu ! Let my crime warn you never to be vain or secure. From the height of self-confidence and arrogant virtue, I was left to make this reproachful step, to humble me. My repentance has been deep and sincere ; and, through the divine redemption, my pardon is procured, and my guilt for ever obliterated.

Your dying friend,

HERMIONE.

L E T T E R XIX.

A letter from Aristus, giving his friend a relation of the sudden death of his new bride, who was seized in the chapel while the sacred rites were performing.

MY fate will furnish you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happiness. My last letter was writ in the height of success, with the most arrogant expectations, and boast of a lasting felicity ; now it is all changed ; the shadows of night cover me.

The lovely Erminia, whom I had so long pursued, and at last persuaded to crown my wishes, the very morning she gave me her hand, before the sacred ceremony was finished, was surprised with the fatal message of death ; and carried in a swoon from the chapel to her chamber, where she soon expired in her mother's arms. This hour she appeared with all the cost and splendor of a youthful bride ; the next she is a pale and senseless corpse, muffled in a ghastly shroud. Those charms that in the morning promised an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropped their smiling pride ; the sparkling eyes are sunk in darkness ; the soft, the tuneful voice, is for ever silent ; while a livid hue sits on the late rosy lips.

Thus airy pleasure dances in our eyes,
And spreads false images in fair disguise,
T' allure our souls ; till just within our arms
The vision dies, and all the painted charms

▲ Flee

Flee quick away from the pursuing sight,
Till they are lost in shades, and mingle with the
night.

Oh death ! how cruel was thy triumph ! Youth and beauty, joy and blooming hope, lie here a victim to thy rage. The darksome prison of the grave must now confine thy gentle captive ; instead of the pomp of a bridle-bed, the cold earth must be her lodging, dust and corruption her covering.

You will now expect I should practise the principles I have so often asserted, in exercising my boasted reason and moderation ; or leave you to insult me with the arguments I lately produced to allay your grief, under the pressure of an uncommon misfortune. This reproach would be but just, at a period when Heaven has given me a full evidence of the truths I confessed, and set the vanity of human hopes in the clearest demonstration before me. One would think I should now, if ever, find it easy to moralize on these subjects, and act the philosopher from mere necessity, if not from virtue.

Were the case yours, or any body's but my own, how many wise things should I repeat ! how fluently could I talk ! so much more easy is it to dictate than to practise. And yet I am reasonable by intervals. I am in more than name a Christian. In some bright periods, I feel the force of that profession, and pay homage to its sacred rules. A heavenly ray scatters my grief, and cheers my soul with divine consolations. The gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal things, vanish before the gleams of celestial light. Immortal pleasures, with gentle invitations, call me to the skies, and all my thoughts ascend.

But how short my triumph ! how easy the transition from reason to madness ! Of what surprising variety is a human mind capable ? Light and darkness, heaven and hell, seem blended within ; it is all chaos, and wild disorder. That
reason

reason which one moment relieves me, the next seems, with a just train of ideas, to torment me.

See there, all pale and dead, she lies ;
 For ever flow my streaming eyes :
 Fly, Hymen, with extinguish'd fires ;
 Fly, nuptial bliss, and chaste desires :
 Erminia's fled ; the loveliest mind ;
 Faith, sweetness, wit, together join'd.

Dwelt faith, and wit, and sweetness there ?
 Oh ! view the change, and drop a tear.

Adieu.

L E T T E R XX.

To Lycidas.

My dear Lycidas,

THere are seasons when the mind dilates itself, and, sensible of its own grandeur, breaks through the limits of this lower creation, in search of some unknown, and yet untasted pleasures. This is my present disposition. The wide limits of the sky have nothing to entertain me : nature seems to be exhausted and indigent. Should she uncover her golden mines, or disclose the ruby sparkling in its bed ; let her open the veins of sapphire, and show the diamond glittering on its native rock,——I have no avarice of this kind. The orient clouds that now adorn the morning-sky ; could I reach them, would be a more substantial treasure.——Appear ye fairest blandishments of sense ; though lovely as the daughters of Eden, your allurements would now be lost.——Let sensuality appear in all her charms, the Persian delicacy, and the Roman pride ;——let the pageantry of state, the triumphs lost in long oblivion, put on airy forms, and pass in their visionary splendor before me ; in my present situation, methinks I could despise them all. These scenes would be but tiresome repetitions ; for they are no novelties to my active imagination. Cleopatra's
 expensive

expensive vanity, and Pompey's glory, are familiar themes to my luxuriant fancy: their descriptions rather tire than delight me. Even the magnificence of the starry arch, the splendid structure of the universe, I now survey with indolence: I grow impatient to see a new and brighter scene appear; when these old heavens, and antiquated earth, shall put off their perishable forms, and stand dressed in immortal beauty, and undecaying excellence. Blessed period! why art thou so long delayed? Oh stretch thy shining wings, and come away! Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and shake thy slow-paced sands! Make shorter circles ye rolling planets! Thou lingering sun, how long wilt thou travel the celestial road! when shall thy radiant walk be finished! When will the great angel arrest thee in thy progress, and swear by him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, that *Time shall be no more!*

My impatient soul springs forward to salute the happy period, and anticipates the promised joy.

Great Nature, then, thro' all her diff'rent works, Shall be transform'd; the earth, and those gay skies, Shall be no more the same; a brighter scene Succeeds; and paradise, in all its charms, Shall be renew'd: but far its bliss improv'd, Fitted for minds, to whom the mighty Maker Shall give the glorious vision of his face, Unveil'd, and smiling with eternal love.

Here let me dwell, nor turn one careless look On yonder hated world; — here let me drink Full draughts of bliss, and bathe in endless floods Of life and joy; — here let me still converse. It cannot be! — Mortality returns! Ye radiant skies, adieu! — Ye starry worlds, I must fulfil my day, and wait the hour That brings eternal liberty and rest,

My native element prevails, and I must return to my original earth again. But I believe you are not overjoyed at this event; you could have resigned me to the skies in your present disposition:

tion: an earthly amour seems to ingross your affection; and I should much more have obliged you by a discourse of mortal charms, than of celestial attachments. But you must excuse me; my mind is in a position too sublime and delicate for these terrene nymphs: as fair as your mistress is, you have no rival in me; at this instant I am all for the immortals.

Oh, ye fair objects, ye untainted springs,
Of every excellence that charms the sense!
Ye native beauties, ye primæval sweets,
That blossom in the skies; but for the hopes
Of those pure entertainments after death,
My soul would joyfully give up its claim
To an immortal state: for what is life,
Reason, and these capacities of bliss,
If lost on toys! No; I have nobler aims,
Desires unbounded by these narrow skies,
These gaudy, flying, transitory scenes;
Eternal glories, and enchanting beauties!

Next time I see you, on condition you will let me laugh, you shall talk of loves and graces, lilies and roses, flames and darts, till Chanticleer gives his last summons to the phantoms and fairies to disappear.

CLERIMONT.

L E T T E R XXI.

To the Earl of ———.

My Lord,

I Am just recovered of the wound I received in the duel, which you, with so much reason and humanity, endeavoured to prevent. I think myself now under an obligation to own the justice and force of your Lordship's arguments, and to retract whatever I said in defence of such an inhuman practice. It was frenzy that made me reject the advice of one who had so true a notion of honour, and whose courage had been so gloriously employed

employed in the cause of liberty, and the Protestant succession.

You told me what the event of this mad adventure would be; that, instead of defending, I should expose my sister's innocence to the public censure. It is too late for me to wish I had been guided by your generous and friendly admonitions; which, for the future, will wear the stamp of infallibility on them. Nor can I propose to myself a nobler example than your Lordship's, in every part of human life. The generous friend, the tender husband, and affectionate parent, appear in their proper lustre.—Virtue, with a superior excellence, shines in your character, and enforces her precepts with resistless eloquence.

The review of your conduct is a severe reproach to my own. I shall never reflect on my late ridiculous exploit without confusion. Whatever bravery I affected, I was conscious of the most slavish fears, in the midst of my insolent flights of vanity. Deliberate guilt hung heavy on my soul. I spent the night before the bloody assignation, in anguish which no words can express; infernal visions haunted my imagination; the caverns of night, the joyless abodes, disclosed their terrors to my distracted fancy.

But so entirely was I governed by the maxims of the licentious part of the world, that with great gallantry I challenged my own ruin, and bid defiance to death and damnation; exposing myself to all the horrors, dreadful to reason and nature, to avoid the imputation of cowardice.

So tyrannical a thing is custom, that it is necessary to ask the world forgiveness, for presuming to be reasonable creatures. People are often compelled to be mad in their own defence, and to act against their reason to avoid being singular. It is hard indeed, that the caprice of mankind should expect an apology from the few that are wiser than the rest, for being awake, and in their right senses; that they should be forced to excuse themselves for keeping their eyes open, and ha-

ving penetration enough to foresee a distant danger, and so much discretion as to avoid it.

A man resolved to leap from a precipice, might, with a better assurance, ridicule his companions for not promising to follow him; and more justly reproach them with cowardice, for refusing to break their necks. than these men of honour can upbraid a person for not complying with rules of valour, at the expence of his life, and all his hopes of future happiness. If my generous adversary had not spared my life, when it lay at his mercy. (while my salvation depended upon that important moment), instead of giving you this penitent relation, I had been now cursing my own folly, under the weight of eternal infamy.

Your Lordship's, &c.

ANTONIO.

L E T T E R XXII.

To Valerius, from an English merchant; giving an account of the adventures of his voyage.

I Am at last safely arrived in Holland, and have taken the first opportunity to give you a relation of the adventures that detained me so long in foreign countries.

In my return from the Indies, I had some affairs with a Spanish merchant; which, while I was managing in one of their sea-ports, there came in a Spanish corsair, who had taken a rich Turkish prize, with several Turks and Moors prisoners, whom he offered to sale as slaves. I never had any traffic of this kind, from any view of interest; but, from a motive of compassion, I had purchased liberty for many a miserable wretch, to whom I gave freedom the moment I paid his ransom.

Among the captives newly taken, there was one distinguished by the richness of his habit, and more by the gracefulness of his port. He drew all my attention; of which he appeared sensible, and
still

still directed his looks to me : our souls seemed to greet one another, as if their intimacy had been of a long standing, and commenced in some pre-existent period. There was something in the air of this young stranger superior to adversity, and yet sensible of the present disadvantage of his fate ; while I felt for him an emotion, soft as the ties of nature, and could not but impute it to the secret impression of some intelligent power, which was leading me to a height of generosity beyond my own intention ; and, by an impulse of virtue on my soul, directing it to the accomplishment of some distant and unknown design of Providence. The heavenly intigitation came with a prevailing force, and I could not but obey its dictates.

The price set on this captive was extravagantly high, and such as would be a vast disadvantage to my present affairs to part with. However, I listened to the gentle monitor within, and paid the corsair his full demands.

As soon as I had conducted the youth to my lodgings, I told him he was from that moment free ; the price I had paid, was for his friendship and liberty.

“ Then you have confined me (replied the gentle stranger) by the most lasting engagements. “ I might have broke through any other restraint ; but I am now your voluntary slave, “ and dare trust you with a secret yet unknown “ to the Spaniards. My name is Orramel, the only “ son of a wealthy Bassa in Constantinople ; and “ you may demand what you will for my ransom.”

“ You will soon be convinced (said I) there was “ no mercenary intention in this action. The “ amity I have for you is noble and disinterested : “ it was kindled by a celestial spark, an emanation from the divine clemency, and terminates “ in nothing below your immortal happiness. And “ were you inclined to examine those sacred truths “ which would lead you to that felicity, and to “ share my fortune in a free and happy nation,

“ the wealth of the Indies should not buy you
“ from my affections : but if it is your choice to
“ return to the customs and religion of your coun-
“ try, you are absolutely free, without attending
“ any terms for your release.”

With a friendly, but dejected look, he told me, it was impossible for him to dispense with his filial obligations to an indulgent parent ; but he positively refused his freedom, till he had given intelligence, and received an answer from his father : which he soon had, with a *carte blanche* to me, on which I might make my own demands for his son's ransom. I returned it with no other terms, but the liberty of all the Christian slaves he had in his possession ; hoping, by this disinterested conduct, to leave a conviction on the mind of my young friend in favour of Christianity. He could persuade me to receive nothing but some little present, and left me with an apparent concern.

It was some months after he was gone, before I could finish my negotiations in Spain ; but, as soon as they were dispatched, I embarked for Holland. We had not been a week at sea before the ship was taken by a Turkish pirate, and all the men in it carried to Constantinople, to be sold as slaves. My lot fell to a master from whom I was like to find most barbarous treatment : however, I was resolved to endure my bondage, till I could give intelligence to my friends in England to procure my ransom. I was fixed to this, that no hardship should reduce me to give Orramel an account of my distress, till I was again in circumstances not to need his kindness, nor expect a retaliation of my own.

But Heaven had kinder intentions by bringing me into this adversity ; nor left me long without redress. As I was talking, in a public place, to one of my fellow-slaves, Orramel came by. He passed beyond me ; but instantly returning, looked on me with great attention, till some melting sorrow dropped from his eyes : when, making inquiry of some that were near, to whom I belonged, and being

being informed, without speaking a word to me, flew to my new master, paid his demand for my ransom, and immediately conducted me to his house, where he welcomed me with the warmest marks of affection. He spoke—he paused—and was in the greatest perplexity, to find language suitable to the sentiments of his soul.

“ My brother !” said he, “ my friend !—or, “ if there are more sacred ties in nature or virtue, let me call you by some gentler appellation ! we are now united by the bands of celestial amity ; one in the same holy faith, and “ hopes of a glorious immortality. Your charity “ rescued me from a worse than Spanish slavery, “ from the bondage of vice and superstition : “ your conduct banished my prejudices to the “ Christian name, and made way for the entrance “ of those heavenly truths to which I now assent. “ But this is a secret even to my own domestics : “ and whether such a caution is criminal, I am “ not yet able to determine.”

With what rapture, what attention, did I listen to this language ! I blessed the accents that told me my friend, my Orramel, had embraced the Christian faith. An angel’s song would have been less melodious. I looked upward, and, with a grateful elevation of mind, gave the glory to the Supreme Disposer of all human events. The instinct was from above, that first moved me to ransom this young captive : thence was the spring of my compassion. It would be vanity, it would be the most criminal arrogance, not to ascribe this action to the assisting Deity.

The illustrious Orramel made it his joy, his study, to evidence his affection. He told me, his father died since we parted in Spain ; and that he had left five daughters, which he had by several of his wives. He offered me the choice of his sisters, if I had any thoughts of marriage ; and promised a dowry with her to my own content. One of them, he said, was privately bred a Christian by her mother, a beautiful woman of Armenia.

I was pleased with the proposal, and impatient to see my fair mistress. In the mean time, he made me a present of several rich habits, and two Negroes to attend me.

The next day he conducted me to a fair summer-house, whither he sent for his sisters; who were all so handsome, that I was distressed with my own liberty; nor knew where to chuse, had not a principle of piety determined me to the young Armenian; who was not superior in beauty to the rest, but there was a decorum in her behaviour which the others wanted. She had more of the modesty and politeness of the European women, to whom you know I was always partial. My choice was fixed; and the more I conversed with my fair mistress, the more reason I found to approve it. We were privately married by a chaplain belonging to the British envoy. My generous friend gave her a fortune, which abundantly repaid all my losses; and, after a prosperous voyage, I am safely landed in Holland.

I have sent you this relation, as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven; whose clemency has returned me more than measure for measure, and largely recompensed that liberality it first inspired.

Adieu.

L E T T E R S

M O R A L A N D E N T E R T A I N I N G .

P A R T H I .

L E T T E R I .

To Lady Sophia. The sequel of the story of Rosalinda.

YOU will find me, dear Lady Sophia, in a more gay disposition than when I writ my last letter. Perhaps the fair season has some influence on my temper. The spring is now in its prime, and blooming nature appears in all her various pride: the fields and groves resound with artless harmony: the linnæ and warbling lark invite me often to rise with the fragrant morning: nor am I unwilling to obey the gentle summons; though, till I came here, I had never beheld the rising sun. The sight was as great a novelty to me as a blazing star would have been. The opening dawn was one of the arcana of nature, into which my curiosity had never pried. Indeed I had read many poetical descriptions, of the rosy-fingered morning unbarring the gates of light, and, decked in golden vestments, beginning her progress over the eastern hills; but I left Aurora to her rural hours, without the least inclination to trace her footsteps in the pearly dew. She was no precedent for me: I was too polite to open my

my eyes at such ungenteel seasons. The sun shone in vain; its beams were useless till the modish world appeared.

But I have now conquered these refinements, and can bear the awkward custom of rising with the fresh morning, and going to bed when the dusky evening closes; or, I might keep myself awake while every other intelligent being on this part of the globe sleeps: when human affairs cease, and the calm creation seems lulled in a peaceful slumber, except elves and fairies. I cannot precisely determine what hours they keep; but here is a nurse in the family, who is intimately acquainted (as she says) with these sprightly phantoms. She has been admitted to their moon-light revels; and has led me to many a circle, distinguished with perpetual verdure, where they use to dance their light fantastic rounds. Bridget and Joyce, our two dairy-maids, add their testimony to the nurse's, and relate their own visionary experience. I am no great infidel: sometimes I believe, and always with the pretty stories they tell me were true; but I dare not object against any of those relations, for fear of being thought a Heathen by the whole village.

My circumstances are now very easy. My mistress is fully persuaded my education has been superiour to my present station, and treats me more like a sister than a servant. I am under no restraints but those of gratitude and justice, which will not suffer me to be idle where I know myself to be dependent.

For a damsel of quality, I can work well enough with my needle; and as this is all my mistress will suffer me to do, I carry my work to some verdant retreat, of which here are great variety, in a large garden, and wide range of orchard joining to the house. I am delighted with old-fashioned bowers, covered with woodbine and sweet-brier, and can sit as much at my ease on a bank of camomile shaded with laurel, as ever I did in a painted alcove. Maple-trees and box, with
bushes

Let. I. MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

bushes of roses, are placed about in a very agreeable disorder: the whole scene appears gay, but wild above rule or art.

“ — While nature here

“ Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will

“ Her virgin-fancies. — ”

MI TON.

The orchard joining to it is spacious and fair as the Hesperian inclosures; violets, primroses, and crocus, embroider the level green on which you tread: the trees are set in rows; their branches mingle above, and are now in their gaudy blossoms: the birds sit careless on the flowery sprays, and from their little throats pour a stream of harmony; while fragrant gales refresh the sense, and with their aromatic breath diffuse gladness to the soul.

Just at the bounds of this luxuriant retreat stands an ancient oak; the extended boughs are a shelter from the mid-day sun, which perhaps your ladyship would endure rather than screen your beauty in such a rustic shade. Elysian groves and myrtle-bowers are better suited to the delicacy of your imagination: but I am now reconciled to nature in its greatest negligence; and, seated in this venerable recess, find virtue and liberty the principal springs of human happiness. My hours are here at my own disposal; nor am I obliged to devote them to ceremony or vain amusements. I find myself under no necessity to court the impertinent, or flatter the ambitious; nor to do a thousand unreasonable things, for fear of being singular, and out of the mode.

The only intimacy I have contracted is with a daughter of the minister of this parish. They call her Sally. Her conversation is perfectly innocent and agreeable, and has something in it charming beyond all the specious rules and studied elegance of the *beau-monde*. She has spent her leisure in reading, and has certainly perused all the good books in her father's study, having never opened a page on any subject but religion, except *Argalus*

and Parthenia. Her preciseness is all natural and unaffected. Her looks, her words, her whole behaviour, has an air of sanctity. One can hardly believe her an inhabitant of this world, but rather a native of some more refined and holy region. The sweetness of her countenance, with the surprising beauty of her whole person, would confirm this thought, if some evidence of mortality did not appear in her declining health. She believes herself in a consumption, and talks of dying as calmly as most people talk of going to sleep.

However, this indifference is not, perhaps, entirely the effect of piety. A tender passion seems to have some share in it. Her health began to decline from the time her lover died. He was the son of a neighbouring clergyman; their marriage was concluded by the consent of both their parents. There had been an innocent tenderness between them from their childhood; and just at the period set to crown their mutual passion, the youth was seized with a fever, which ended his life, and left the gentle maid to mourn her disappointed joys.

Since that, she has no attachment to this world; all her schemes of happiness are in a future state, on which her whole attention is fixed; and nothing can be more sparkling than her conversation on these subjects. As some people grow dull and morose in talking of religion, it brightens her countenance, gives a vivacity to her thoughts, and heavenly eloquence to her tongue. The beauty of the spangled firmament in a clear summer-evening gives her an apparent pleasure. "In a little time," she often says, "I shall have a nearer view of those radiant wonders, and shall myself outshine their glimmering lustre."

You would be glad, Lady Sophia, if I would leave Sally with the angels, and talk to you of knights of the garter, blue ribbands, embroidered coats, and other sublunary things. There is such a wide extreme betwixt these subjects and heavenly themes, that I cannot introduce your tender affair with any manner of decorum; the descent is

too precipitate. But if I must talk of love, my own amour is somewhat more of the ethereal kind than yours, and the transition will not be so difficult.

Nor will it displease you, to hear that my lover continues constant, with the addition of six thousand a-year to his estate. It was left him by one of the S——r family, who lately died without an heir.

My mistress has been a constant advocate for the lovely youth, believing his proposal a vast preferment for me; while my generous lover makes his addresses with greater warmth and assurance than when his estate was less, thinking it now in his power to offer me a reparation for whatever misfortune hath reduced me to a state so unequal to what (he is persuaded) my education has been.

I have not yet accepted his proposal, nor discovered my rank to him; but it is very probable I shall do both. What objection can I, or rather what can you make against it? His descent is every way illustrious, and has vastly the advantage of mine. Nature has distinguished him with an air of grandeur, beyond all the borrowed lustre of titles or equipage. There is an elegance in his behaviour superior to the rules of art or imitation; not Paris, when confessed prince on the plains of Ida, appeared more graceful. He talks of love, not in the strains of dramatic frenzy, but with the sobriety of reason and virtue. Persuasion dwells on his tongue, while he describes the gentle passion in accents calm as the midnight-air. What the consequence will be, I cannot yet determine. Dear Lady Sophia, adieu.

ROSALINDA.

LETTER II.

To Lady Sophia.

MY romance is now finished, the drama is come to a conclusion: I have been married these

four months ; and from the sober regular way of life I am now in, you must expect no more adventures.

I forgot in my last to inform you, that with the six thousand a-year there was a seat nobly furnished left to —. What must I call him ? Not my husband, for fear the awkward domestic sound should give you the spleen. And if I should give him the appellation of my gallant, my lover, or the charming youth, you would think me run mad in romance. But I hope I may call him by his proper name, which is Lucius.

The seat of which he is now the possessor, looks like the abode of liberty and guiltless delight. The situation has something in it so jovial and airy, that it gives an alacrity to the mind. It stands on a gentle rising, with the view of a spacious valley before it, through which a luxuriant river draws its shining train, and blesses the borders with immortal verdure ; the wide champaign beyond opens a fair variety of hills, of groves, and fertile plains, which terminate in a distant prospect of the sea. You have this beautiful scene of nature from every window in the front of the house.

The opposite side of the structure discloses a quite different view. As that seems the triumph of Nature, this appears the insult of Art. The gardens and groves are so exquisitely fine and regular, that I fancy my self in fairy-land ; it looks all like the effect of enchantment, and beyond human contrivance.

The loves and graces, figured in the painted alcoves, persuade me I am got among the immortals, who seem to court me to their soft recesses ; when through a long vista the smiling forms rise in just proportion before me, I converse with deities, and am charmed with the wonders of the poetical world.

I find leisure enough for these visionary delights, being discharged from family-cares by my husband's grandmother, who is qualified to manage those affairs with great prudence and decency. It is a pleasure

pleasure to me to submit to her advice in every punctilio, as I find it obliges Lucius, who treats her with the utmost deference and respect; nor fails to find some handsome excuse for any thing that has the appearance of obstinacy or caprice in her temper.

His merit, in every occurrence, secures my esteem. An air of justice and benignity shines through his whole conduct. His mind was in the same elevation when his fortune was at the lowest; nor has this unexpected turn had the least influence on the modesty and evenness of his disposition. His management in every thing is at once generous and discreet. He has devoted a thousand pounds a-year, out of the six thousand, to charitable uses; another thousand he secured to me for my peculiar expences; the rest to be spent in his household, the charge of which he has limited to his income, and pays his bills once a-month with great exactness, that no honest tradesman may be injured by his delay. Whatever trespass is done by the carelessness of his servants, in the pursuit of their rural sports, he patiently hears the complaints of the sufferers, and restores their damage to the full.

His compassion is equal to his justice. Never has he been seen to turn away from a spectacle of pity; never has he shut his ears to the voice of distress; never, by an insolent reproach, silenced the cries of poverty, nor delayed his bounty to the necessitous.

Several honest clergymen, with large families and narrow incomes, have already experienced his generosity, and blessed their young benefactor. He has taken a son of a neighbouring minister into the family, who was bred at the university, and is a youth of great piety, and very good sense. He reads constantly to us morning and evening prayers, when not a servant in the house is suffered to be absent.

Lucius has a handsome collection of English and French authors. His father lived long enough to see

see him instructed in both these languages: so that his books, with the conversation of the young student, are the agreeable amusement of his leisure hours; which are not so many as he seems to wish, his rank and merit still engaging him in new acquaintance, there being several gentlemen's seats scattered about in this pleasant campaign.

I find myself more free and disengaged, having no companion but Sally. In her conversation I forget I am below the stars, and mingle with immortal beings. Her sentiments are all elevated and refined; the language of heaven flows from her lips, in accents sweet as an angel's voice. She has a surprising memory, and speaks the finest parts of Milton by heart. I fancy myself among the celestial minstrels, when she repeats that description, where

“ ——— Their golden harps they take,
 “ Harps ever tun'd, that, glitt'ring by their side,
 “ Like quivers hang, and, with preamble sweet
 “ Of charming symphony, they introduce
 “ Their sacred song, and waken raptures high.”

Mr Pope's MESSIAH is another of her favourite poems; which she recites with such a graceful pronunciation, that it seems always new and surprising.

But while I am enjoying this agreeable society, I know it is a pleasure that is stealing from me, like some fair flower, whose bloom withers while I am regaling my sense with its fragrancy. The young saint is bidding adieu to mortal things, and preparing for her native skies. I brought her hither, to try if the change of air would mend her health: but I see no advantage she has by it; and, finding her impatient to return, I have promised to carry her, in my chaise, to-morrow back to her father's house. I go the more willingly, that I may make a visit to the peaceful abode where I spent so many happy hours.

I know not if my mistress has yet recovered the confusion she was in at the discovery of my quality.

ty. As for Lucius, it seemed to be no secret to him. He told me, there was something in my behaviour that convinced him I was not in my proper station; but by what misfortune I was sunk, he could never make the least conjecture. My conduct, he thought, was too reserved to suffer him to suspect any thing to my disadvantage; and when he found my concealment was on a religious account, it gave him the highest satisfaction, to find it in his power to place me in circumstances more agreeable and independent.

Two or three days after I was married, I writ to my father, with all the submission and tenderness that natural affection could dictate. I am informed he relents, and is pleased with an alliance to this noble family. But I have not yet had the honour of any letter or message from his Lordship. Oh! could I throw myself at his feet, and once more hear his paternal blessing, my happiness were complete!

The pastoral I have inclosed was only writ as a solitary amusement; which makes me send it without any apology, or giving myself the airs of being an author. I hope it will not displease you, that my shepherd happens to be a Christian; and that the pastoral scene lies on the British plains, as long as I leave you to wander at your leisure in the vale of Tempe, or follow your fleecy charge on the fair Arcadian pastures. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

ROSALINDA.

A PASTORAL.

HENRY and LUCY.

Henry: **L**UCY, while resting in this verdant shade,
 By pow'r divine thus elegantly made,
 Say, canst thou envy pomp and regal rooms,
 Gay with the luxury of Persian looms?
 Or painted roofs, whose beauty would entice
 The thoughts through all the fabled joys of vice?
Fabled,

Fabled, indeed ! true joys it cannot boast,
Since pleasure flies when innocence is lost.
Remorse, despair, and every cruel guest,
Become the inmates of the guilty breast.

Lucy. How spotless, Henry, is thy well turn'd
mind,

Averse to ill, to follow good inclin'd !
With thee conversing, ev'ry day I learn
New charms in sacred virtue to discern ;
And, emulous of thee, with joy pursue
That goodness I admire and love in you.

Henry. Thou need'st not learn of me. In Na-
ture's book

Thou mayst on thy Creator's wisdom look :
And as the planets run their constant race,
His glorious footsteps in their order trace.
He bids the sun in all its beauty rise,
To bless our soil, and gild the vaulted skies ;
And, by the word of his almighty power,
Ordains the moon to cheer the midnight hour ;
While sparkling stars in solemn order wait
Upon her silent course, to grace her state.

Lucy. Nor in the skies alone his power is seen ;
We view it in the grove, and flow'ry green.
To imitate whose charms all art is faint.
The roses glowing blush what hand can paint ?
Or equal the pale lily's snowy hue ?
Or emulate the cornflow'r's glossy blue ?

Henry. Sure, Lucy, we, like the first pair, are blest,
While here, secure with innocence and rest,
Our happy hours on downy pinions fly ;
When thus assisted by faith's stedfast eye,
Upon our Maker's works we humbly gaze,
And, for their goodness, render him the praise.
Thus, in the patriarch's days, the Jewish swains,
Who fed their flocks on Mamre's fruitful plains,
Worshipp'd Jehovah in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruit they yield ;
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights, and sanctify their days.
But, see ! the ev'ning o'er the dewy lawn
Already has her sable curtain drawn.

Homeward

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Homeward we'll go, and, as we slowly walk,
Beguile the tedious way with farther talk.

d
LETTER III.

From the same, to Lady Sophia.

Madam,

a.
THE day after I writ to you last, I carried Sally home ; where I left her, not thinking, when we parted, that we were to meet no more in this world : but so it proved. She languished about three weeks, and then, without any struggle or convulsive pangs, gently resigned her breath.

With what impatience she attended the happy period, the inclosed will inform you. She writ it a few days before she died, and gave it in charge to one of her friends to deliver to me.

To Rosalinda.

Dear Lady Frances,

ft,
“ MY sands are now running low. The springs
“ of life will soon cease. The dust is re-
“ turning to its native dust, and the immortal
“ part to its great original. The happy day is
“ dawning, which shall never be shaded with suc-
“ ceeding night. Some glimmerings of celestial
“ glory break through the gloom, and scatter the
“ horrors of death. I hear from far the harps of
“ heaven in soft preludiums call me to the skies.

as,
“ I shall shortly mingle with the morning-stars,
“ and converse with the first-born sons of light.
“ I shall enter the blissful assembly, and be num-
“ bered among the glittering attendants of the
“ empyrean courts. The supreme Excellence shall
“ unveil itself, and suffer me to gaze on uncreated
“ beauty. I shall feel the force, and breathe the
“ raptures of immortal love. The smiling mo-
“ ments crowned with joy, and ever-blooming
“ life, must now begin their everlasting round.

d
“ The stormy ocean is past, the short fatigue

H h

“ fulfilled ;

“ fulfilled ; the peaceful haven is in view. I am
 “ just setting my foot on the blissful coast. The
 “ charming land of love, the aromatic breezes, al-
 “ ready meet me from the fragrant shore, and
 “ cheer me in the last faintings of nature.

“ Dear Lady Frances, adieu. Till now I never
 “ bid you a glad farewell, nor parted without re-
 “ luctance. But we shall meet in more serene
 “ climates. We shall meet in the fulness of joy,
 “ in the elevations of glory. Mine, indeed, by
 “ the just degrees of recompence, will be a station
 “ far below yours. My probation has been only
 “ the passive exercise of content and patience.
 “ But such virtue as yours, which has triumphed
 “ on all the gay allurements of the world, shall
 “ meet a glorious distinction. The noble army of
 “ martyrs will receive you to their number, grace
 “ you with the radiant circlet and victorious
 “ palm, and record your conquest in the annals
 “ of heaven.

“ I speak this, to animate your virtue, to encour-
 “ age you in the race of glory. I am now past
 “ flattery, or dependence on the greatest of mor-
 “ tals. But I feel the most tender concern for
 “ your happiness, and shall carry the gentle im-
 “ pression to the regions of exalted friendship,
 “ the native dominions of love, to which I am
 “ now going. Once more, my dear Rosalinda,
 “ adieu.”

This letter came to me with the sad tidings of
 her death. No language can describe my grief
 in its just emphasis. You will give me leave to
 weep, and sympathize with

Your

ROSALINDA.

L E T T E R IV.

To Carlos.

AS you was the confident of my unjust design,
 in visiting Philander at his country seat, you
 have

have reason to expect I should inform you of the success of that adventure.

I had a secret passion for Aspasia before her marriage with this noble youth, and flattered myself with some hopes of finding her prepossessed in my favour.

You know how exceeding cautious and discreet I have been in my pleasures, and with what dissimulation I have secured to myself the character of a man of honour and sobriety. By this advantage I found it easy to impose on my friend; whose goodness was real and unaffected, while his unblemished integrity left him unguarded to all my artifice.

But I found it impossible to delude my father by my specious virtues. His penetration saw through that disguise by which I had escaped the public censure. Nor could any thing have been more detestable to his open temper than the affectation and hypocrisy of mine. After he had traced one of my most criminal intrigues, and found me unreclaimed by his tenderest admonitions, he resolved to disinherit me, and settle his estate on my younger brother, who is really possessed of all those good qualities, to which, with a vain ostentation, I have only pretended.

My brother perceiving my father's disgust, and the intention he had to make him his heir, with an unequalled generosity gave me intelligence of the threatened misfortune, desiring me to employ some friend to persuade my father from his severe proceeding.

This news came to me while I was detained a willing guest by Philander at his country-seat. I discovered the affair to him, who immediately offered to attempt a reconciliation. I gladly accepted the kind intention, nor knew any person so likely to succeed.

Philander proposed staying two or three days with my father, in order to insinuate himself the more successfully. In the mean time, I found but too easy access to the fair Aspasia; and, by an ar-

tifice that deserves the blackest infamy, prevailed with her to make a criminal appointment in a private garden, belonging to the house.

This was the second day of her husband's absence. The happy hour (as I then thought it) arrived when I was to attend my mistress in a sequestered arbour. But just as I was entering the walk that led to it, a footman came hastily after me with a letter from Philander, which brought me the welcome news of his success with my father. The vast satisfaction he expressed for having procured this reconciliation, with the real concern for my welfare, which appeared in every line, raised a sense of honour in my soul. I read the letter again, and found my guilt aggravated by its bright reverse. My falsehood was heightened by the warmth and fidelity with which the generous man had pursued my interest. My crime stood before me in its most infamous view. But how to extricate myself from this perplexity, I was entirely at a loss.

To neglect an opportunity I had with such sollicitude obtained, to disappoint a yielding beauty, to dare the effects of her contempt or repentment, by acting contrary to all the gallant maxims of the world, was doing the utmost violence to a disposition like mine. But then, to wrong my friend with an evidence of his fidelity in my hand, where every tender line would reproach such villany. Alexander and Scipio (I told myself) would condemn me; with many an heroic Pagan, who, in the height of youthful desires, had conquered the allurements of a guilty passion.

It was happy for me, that some accident prevented Aspasia from following me so soon as she designed. I was so far from being impatient at her absence, that I blessed every moment's delay, and was contriving to avoid the interview just as I saw her entering the garden.

I had been unused to mental devotion; and yet, in this dangerous moment, on which my perdition seemed

seemed to hang, I sent a secret prayer to Heaven for assistance.

Instead of flying to the charmer's embraces with the gaiety of a lover, I went forward with a slow reluctant pace till we met, and then gave her my friend's letter. As soon as she had read it, she told me, "I might be assured it spoke the language of his soul: and it is (added she) to the advantageous light in which he has set your character; it is entirely to that you are obliged, for the favourable opinion I have of you."

"Is it, indeed, to this generous man (I replied) that I am indebted for the share I have in your esteem! And can I return such goodness with the vilest ingratitude!"——Here I paused, still keeping a respectful distance.

Aspasia, with her eyes fixed on the ground, stood in a silent confusion. But, in this mute interval, imagine, if you can, what must be the conflict of my soul! I had spoke my last; an eternal silence must certainly have ensued, if the gentle Aspasia, perceiving my distress, had not put me out of pain for an apology.

"I see (said she) the disorder you are in. This retreat of honour ought to have been mine. I sincerely wish it had been so. However, you have led me the way, and I owe my recovery to your prudence."

"It was my importunity, Madam, (replied I), that drew you into this criminal engagement; for which I am going to inflict on myself the severe penalty of seeing you no more."

"This was what I was just resolving, (answered the fair penitent); but you have gone before me in every step of virtue. We must indeed meet no more. Some disorder I feel gives me a pretence to retire immediately to my chamber; and you may leave this place early in the morning, with a proper excuse for not seeing me."

She was seated under a shade of jessamine, and appeared charming as the queen of love. My philosophy

losophy began to stagger, when she hastily rose, and left me in an agony of mind which no words can express.

However, I had so much command of myself as not to follow her. My reason exerted all its powers. The Divinity within spoke with a commanding force, and bid the wild tempestuous passions be still. My soul obeyed the sacred dictates, while truth and friendship took full possession of my breast.

I hastened early the next morning from this dangerous place; and must own to you, this action has given me a pleasure in reflection superior to all the gratifications of sense.

Yours, &c.

ALCANDER.

L E T T E R V.

To Carlos, from the same.

After your severest raillery on my conduct, I hope you will pardon me for being a reasonable creature, and not insist on my making an apology for following the dictates of honour and gratitude. To your cooler thoughts, virtue may not perhaps appear so trivial and fantastic a thing. In your splenetic intervals, falsehood and treachery will probably lose their charms, and put on an aspect of horror and deformity. When the sagacity of youth is past, and a few years have impaired your understanding, you may grow superstitious, and be whimsical enough to fancy friendship and truth are words of the most sacred importance. Since it is not impossible for you to fall into such errors yourself, you ought to pass a charitable censure on my principles and practice, however different from your own.

I have ventured to send you this careless translation of *Tasso's Enchanted Forest*. This beautiful fiction seems contrived to arm the soul with a noble resolution in whatever occurrence its virtues are called into action. Rinaldo's inflexibility, I hope, will

will keep me a little in countenance ; though I have not the vanity to run a parallel between the young hero's exploit and mine.

Dear Carlos, adieu. Be assured I am too much your friend to leave any method untried for your reformation.

ALCANDER.

The ENCHANTED FOREST.

[Taken from Tasso's JERUSALEM, book 18.]

THE dawning light scarce hover'd in the east,
When young Rinaldo left his wonted rest ;
Completely arm'd in all his martial pride,
A costly scarf was o'er his shoulders ty'd :
Unseen, he pass'd along each silent tent,
And onward to the dreadful forest went.
'Twas now the season when the ling'ring night
Disputes her empire with the rising light ;
A rosy blush here paints the doubtful morn,
There glimm'ring stars th' uncertain shades adorn.
This scene the thoughtful hero entertain'd,
As on the steep of Olivet he gain'd ;
The dawning lustre, and declining night,
With various beauties entertain his sight.

" Ye num'rous flaming lamps above," he cries,
" Which deck the lofty temple of the skies !
" Thou sun, whose face a golden splendor wears !
" Thou silver moon, and all ye sparkling stars !
" What trifles to your glories are prefer'd !
" How little we celestial things regard !
" A sparkling glance, the lightning of a smile,
" Of heav'n itself our easy hearts beguile."

Thus reas'ning, he the sacred hill ascends,
And humbly there with decent rev'rence bends ;
Adoring to the east, he turns his eyes,
His thoughts unbounded reach the inmost skies.
Mean-while the morn in golden vestments rose,
Her visage with a bright vermilion glows :
New beams Rinaldo's crest and armour gild,
Which dart their lustre o'er the verdant field ;

Refreshing

Refreshing breezes round him gently play,
And balmy odours on their wings convey;
While, from her lap, Aurora on his head
A cloud of pure celestial dew does shed;
Dipp'd in th' ethereal mist, a lucid white
His robes display, and stream with silver light.
Such when the morning's cheerful rays appear,
Such lively looks the op'ning blossoms wear;
So looks, renew'd in all its glitt'ring pride,
The serpent, when he casts his age aside.

The knight still to the wood his way pursu'd,
Nor any horror in its prospect view'd;
The fatal forest, whence with sudden dread
The bravest soldiers of the camp had fled,
Appears to him a kind inviting shade. }
Advancing on, a soft melodious sound
Fills all the fair enchanted grove around;
The noise of murm'ring currents rolling by,
With sighing winds, which thro' the branches fly;
The swan, in dying melancholy strains,
In concert with the nightingale complains;
The organ, harp, and human voice are found
Mingling their notes in one harmonious sound.
While from above, as others had before,
The youth expects to hear loud thunders roar;
Instead of these, the songs of Syrens finds,
The chant of birds, with warbling waves and winds.
Amaz'd, he now his hasty steps suspends,
And forward now with cautious paces bends;
No obstacle his passage yet withstood,
Besides an ample, smooth, transparent flood,
From whence a thousand riv'lets break away,
Which thro' the shades in wanton windings stray;
Their banks were with luxuriant verdure crown'd,
And painted flow'rs adorn'd the smiling ground.

Rinaldo paus'd, when instantly appear'd,
A stately bridge on golden arches rear'd,
Presenting cross the stream a spacious way,
Which he undaunted pass'd without delay;
Nor sooner touch'd the river's distant brinks,
But down the visionary structure sinks;

And

And what before in gentle waves roll'd by,
 A torrent swells, and lifts its billows high.
 No bounds the sudden inundation knows,
 Rising like floods increas'd by melting snows.

The hero fearless still his course pursues,
 And wheresoe'er he turns, fresh wonder views ;
 For wheresoe'er he turns, a sudden spring
 Appears, and blooming flow'rs their odours bring ;
 The lily courts him, and the fragrant rose
 At his approach with brighter crimson glows ;
 Their crystal arms the bubb'ling springs display,
 And living fountains open in his way ;
 The branchy trees their verdant pride renew,
 From ev'ry leaf distils ambrosial dew ;
 The waters, winds, and tuneful birds again,
 Join'd with the voice and lute, begin their soothing
 strain ;

Nor yet appears to whom the melting song,
 The human voice, and charming lute, belong.

Suspended he remains, and scarce believes
 His waking thoughts, or what his sense perceives ;
 When issuing from the forest's lofty shade,
 He finds an ample plain before him spread ;
 A wond'rous myrtle in the midst appear'd ;
 Aloft in air its stately head was rear'd ;
 Its height the palm and cypress far surpass,
 And all beneath a closer shadow cast.
 Around the leafy arms extended wide,
 It tow'ring stood, of all the grove the pride :
 On the prodigious plant he fix'd his eyes,
 Till more prodigious things his mind surprise.
 A pregnant oak with sudden rupture parts,
 While from its trunk a blooming virgin starts ;
 Numbers like her their hollow prisons rend,
 And on the plain in shining robes descend.
 So dress'd, the graceful Cynthia haunts the groves ;
 Such are her nymphs, and such the goddess moves.
 Their folding vests above the knee were ty'd,
 Their slender legs the silken buskins hide ;
 Their snowy arms were bare ; their locks behind
 Dishevell'd hung, and wanton'd in the wind.

Like these appear the beauteous sylvan race,
 When o'er the lawns the flying prey they trace;
 No bows indeed they held, nor quivers wore,
 But warbling lutes in their fair hands they bore;
 A circle round the wond'ring knight they made,
 And danc'd in artful measures as they play'd.

"Hail, lovely youth! (they sung), our Lady's
 care!

"For thee these soft recesses we prepare;
 "For thee she fondly languishes all day,
 "And wastes her life in restless fires away;
 "These groves thy absence lately seem'd to mourn,
 "But all look fresh and gay at thy return."

While with these melting strains they charm
 his ears,

A sweeter voice he from the myrtle hears,
 And issuing thence a lovelier nymph appears.
 If ancient times, with pious awe inspir'd,
 Silenus in his antique form admir'd,
 What had the superstitious dotage been,
 The mad effect of this surprising scene!
 Her shape was human; but a heav'nly grace,
 And beauty all divine, adorn'd her face.
 With doubtful eyes Rinaldo views the fair,
 And soon recalls Armida's tempting air;
 Then with a soft alluring pensive look,
 Which meant a thousand tender things, she spoke.

"Art thou return'd, the cause of all my pain?

"Do I behold those fatal eyes again?

"Dost thou at last, ungrateful man! relent,

"And pity my fond youth in sorrow spent?

"Or as an enemy pursue me here?

"For this thy arms and threat'ning looks declare.

"But I no enemy, no traitor fear'd,

"When o'er the flood the golden bridge I rear'd;

"When gaudy flow'rs along thy path were strow'd,

"And living springs to entertain thee flow'd."

Approaching nearer then, she softly cries,

"Remove this envious helmet's vain disguise,

"And let me view again those charming eyes."

With that a moving tear she fondly shed,
 While from her cheeks the hasty blushes fled;

Then

Then sigh'd, and downward cast her lovely eyes:
And soft complaints, and kind reproaches, tries:
Her words the coldest adamant would move,
And melt the most obdurate heart to love.

The youthful hero feels the kindling fires,
And timely from his dang'rous foe retires;
Again he scorns her wiles, and fiercely drew
His shining sword, and at the myrtle flew.

Armida runs before with eager haste,
Then twining round her darling plant embrac'd;
"Oh, stay," she cries, "stay thy inhuman hand,
"Or let thy weapon in my breast be stain'd."
Unmov'd, and deaf to all her pray'rs he stood,
And lifts his sword to hew the fatal wood.

Th' enchantress soon another method tries,
And as in dreams uncouth chimeras rise,
She stalks a monstrous bulk before his eyes;
A dusky gloom her changing face o'erspread;
Vanish'd the snowy white, and youthful red;
Then like Briareus, with his hundred hands,
A mighty giant in his view she stands;
And fifty flaming swords at once she wields,
And shakes aloft as many blazing shields;
Her nymphs appear like horrid Cyclops arm'd:
But nothing his undaunted heart alarm'd.

The martial youth his sounding strokes renew'd,
While hollow groans the sounding strokes ensu'd;
Stupendous terrors fill'd the darken'd place,
Resembling now the black infernal space:
Thunder'd the low'ring heav'ns with dreadful
sound,

Echo'd in subterranean vaults the ground;
Trembled the earth, lighten'd the flashing skies,
While warring winds from ev'ry quarter rise.

Rinaldo stands the raging tempest's frown,
Till one fierce stroke fells the tall myrtle down;
Th' enchantment ends, the phantoms disappear,
The storms are hush'd the heav'ns serenely clear.

L E T T E R VI.

To Albanus.

YOU seem at present suspended between virtue and vice ; your mind is in such a mysterious situation, that it is not easy to determine to what class you belong. One can hardly call you a saint, the flattery would be too apparent ; and yet it would be a little uncharitable to put you in the opposite rank, where your own modesty has placed you. But my business is not to dispute what you are, but to give you the information you desire ; and, from my own experience, to resolve on which side the advantage of pleasure falls.

You imagine I have acted in both the characters of saint and sinner, and tried the extremes of virtue and vice. In the last I am too much experienced : but this makes me more capable of passing a censure ; for I was a sort of philosophic libertine, and pursued pleasure for the sake of demonstration. I paused, I reasoned, I made critical reflections on every enjoyment ; I proposed something beyond gratifying a low and sensual inclination ; mine was a deliberate search after happiness ; while the method was wrong, my end was right ; but every guilty experiment brought its own conviction, and left me restless and disappointed.

Sometimes I exclaimed in prose, sometimes in verse. I burlesqued the vanities of life, and the weakness of human nature ; I turned moralist, looked grave, and acted soberly. But this was a situation too cold for my temper ; it was neither sleeping nor waking : this supine indolence was but a poor exchange for the jovial activities I had resigned ; nor could I assent to that spiritless maxim, that *virtue was its own reward*, if there was no future expectation. *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, appeared to me a much more rational conclusion.

However, this deliberation, this pause, this moral essay, and restraint of my passions, was the first
step

step I made towards real happiness. In the absence of sensual amusements, my thoughts found leisure, for a nobler application; my soul grew familiar with itself, and sought acquaintance with intellectual beings. Distressed with the vicissitude of mortal things, it traced back its own divine original, and claimed paternal refuge from the great Spring of all existence. I felt the attraction strong as the bands of nature; that felicity I had blindly sought, the unknown God I had ignorantly worshipped, now revealed himself to me, as the sovereign good, and my peculiar bliss.

How an almighty agent acts, no language of men can describe; but I felt the sacred influence. I heard the heavenly sound, the soft melodious voice calling me away from earthly vanities, while a ray of celestial beauty sparkling on my soul, eclipsed the glories of the world, and darkened all the pride of Nature; the mists of ignorance and error vanished before the divine illumination, which, with a pleasing evidence, compelled my assent to the glorious truths it proposed; my apprehensions were enlarged, and a sanctity of disposition infused; those heights of virtue which I once thought impracticable, now appeared easy, and attended with ineffable delight, such as gave me some delicious prelibations

Of those immortal banquets, those rich draughts
 Of vital pleasure, which my thirsty soul
 Shall drink for ever in.—

These are no fantastic delusions, but real and divine enjoyments, such as enlarge the mind, and give it a nobler disposition, while, conscious of its own grandeur, it rests in nothing below boundless and immortal felicity.

This is what you seem anxiously to inquire after. How happy shall I be, if my experience can direct you in such an important search! You will excuse the sending you these negligent lines on a subject so superior to my genius.

On

ON H A P P I N E S S.

WHatever diff'rent paths mankind pursue,
 Oh Happiness! 'tis thee we keep in view!
 'Tis thee in ev'ry action we intend,
 The noblest motive, and superior end!
 Thou dost the scarcely finish'd soul incline;
 Its first desire, and conscious thought, is thine;
 Our infant breasts are sway'd by thee alone,
 When pride and jealousy are yet unknown.
 Through life's obscure and wild variety,
 Our steadfast wishes never start from thee.
 Thou art of all our waking thoughts the theme;
 We court thee too in ev'ry nightly dream:
 Th' immortal flame with equal ardour glows,
 Nor one short moment's intermission knows:
 Whether to courts or temples we repair,
 With restless zeal we search thee ev'ry where;
 Whether the roads that to perdition lead,
 Or those which guide us to the stars, we tread,
 Thine is the hope, th' inestimable prize,
 The glorious mark, on which we fix our eyes!
 Thy charms th' enamour'd libertine entice
 Thro' all the wild destructive paths of vice.
 Th' advent'rous man refines on sin, and makes,
 In search of thee, to hell new-beaten tracks;
 Enchanting pleasure dances in his sight,
 And tempts him forward by a treach'rous light.
 But while thy flatt'ring smiles his thoughts inflame,
 Thou prov'it to him a mere fantastic name,
 A fair delusion, and a pleasing cheat,
 A gaudy vision, and a soft deceit;
 Which while the wretch pursues with eager pace,
 And seems to overtake thee in the race,
 An airy phantom mocks his close embrace;
 His arms in vain the sportive shade would fold,
 Still like a gliding ghost it slips his fondest hold;
 The disappointment heightens yet his rage,
 And tempts him with fresh ardour to engage;
 Successless, but unweary'd in the strife,
 He still pursues thee to the verge of life;

With

With life compell'd his dotage to resign,
The last despairing sigh he breathes is thine.

The pious man directs his vows to thee,
And proves thy most pathetic votary.
Virtue it self, ev'n virtue he regards :
But as thy favour the fatigue rewards.
To silent shades, and solitude obscure,
Far from the world thou dost his steps allure ;
But there he lives retir'd, a glorious epicure,
And gladly quits the fleeting joys of sense,
In search of bliss more lasting and intense.
Not such as the fond lover's heart beguiles,
When, without art, his yielding mistress smiles ;
Not such as fills the youthful hero's mind,
When wreaths of victory his temples bind :
His thoughts a nobler luxury would prove,
Such as the bless'd immortals know above ;
A spark divine like theirs his breast inflames,
Enjoyments all divine like theirs he claims,
Licentious and unbounded in his aims,
To pleasure's sacred spring his soul aspires,
There only hopes to quench his infinite desires.
Not envious hell the passion can suppress,
Fir'd by thy name, alluring Happiness !
Undaunted he maintains the gen'rous strife,
And struggles for thee to the close of life ;
Then joyful clasps thee in his dying arms,
And yields his breath, possess'd of all thy charms.

This is the conclusion to which I stand, after the exactest trial of sensual and intellectual pleasures. Without hesitation, I gave my voice on the side of virtue ; and this in the gayest period of my life, unruffled with adversity or disappointment, in the affluence of fortune, and the luxury of youth ; with a mind capacious of bliss, and panting after happiness.

In this situation you cannot object against the severity of my temper. However, as few persons care to be wise at other people's expence, I cannot expect, that, without any farther trial, you will acquiesce in the judgment of

Your most humble servant.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R VII.

To Lucius.

IT was you that propos'd this subject to my muse, but I have hardly the vanity to hope the performance will please a judgment so exact as yours. However, it is entirely submitted to your censure, by

Your most humble servant,

LINDAMOR.

An ODE on LOVE.

ASSIST my doubtful muse, propitious Love,
Let all my soul the sacred impulse prove :
For thine's a holy unpolluted flame,
Howe'er the libertine profane thy name ;
Howe'er with impious cant, hypocrisy
And senseless superstition blemish thee.

The pure result of sober reason thou ;
Thy laws the strictest honour must allow :

Thy laws each vicious thought controul ;
From thee devotion takes its flaming wings :
Thou giv'st the noblest motion to the soul,

And govern'st all its springs.

To great attempts thou gen'rous minds dost move,
And only such are privileg'd to love ;
Th' heroic race, the brightest names of old,
Were all thy glorious votaries enroll'd.

Without thee, human life

A tedious round of circling cares would be,
A curs'd fatigue, continual strife,
And tiresome vanity.

Thy charms our restless griefs controul,
And calm the stormy motions of the soul :
Before thee pride and enmity,
With all infernal passions, fly.

And could'st thou in the realms below

But once display thy beauteous face,
The damn'd a short redress might know,
And ev'ry terror fly the place.

From

From thee one bright unclouded smile
Would all the torments there beguile;
Thy smiles th' eternal tempest could assuage,
And make the damn'd forget their rage;
The sulph'rous waves would cease to roar,
And calmly glide along the silent shore.

Had Orpheus (as 'tis fabled) through the ground
To hell the gloomy passage found,
His warbling voice, his melting lyre,
Nor artful touches on the trembling string,
Had ne'er obtain'd his bold desire,
Nor charm'd the furies with their sullen king;
But love, his tender theme, had love been nam'd,
That potent sound alone had all their malice tam'd.

On thee the graces and delights attend,
On thy propitious influence
Our gayest hours depend;
Whatever charms the soul or sense,
Beauty and sacred harmony,
Accomplish'd Love! belongs to thee.
To thee his shining genius Strephon owes,
His just ideas, and expressions fit;
To thee Cleora owes that sprightly wit,
Which from her lips in easy language flows.

The mute creation owns thy sway;
And things inanimate thy laws obey;
At thy command the first confusion ceas'd,
Chaos and wild disorder were appeas'd:
Discord and fierce antipathy grew mild,
The gleams of light thro' yielding darkness smil'd,
And warring elements were reconcil'd: }

Nature begun a steady course,
Govern'd by central charms, and sympathetic force.

But in the blissful skies alone,
Almighty Love! thy pow'r is fully known:

There they view thy charming face,
Painted with endless smiles, and ever-blooming
grace.

Thy gentle torch burns there for ever bright,
And scatters round a mild propitious light;

All feel its pleasing influence,
While pure desires thy golden shafts dispense.

Th' immortal lovers, crown'd with fragrant flow'rs,
In rosy shades, and blissful bow'rs,
To thee devote their happy hours,
While active joys too noble for disguise,
And vital pleasures sparkle in their eyes;
To thee alone, great Love, their heav'n they owe,
The boundless source whence all their blessings flow.

Thy sacred flame
Does ev'ry heav'nly breast inspire,
And tune the strings of each celestial lyre;
In flow'ry vales, to ev'ry blissful stream,
With melting notes they celebrate thy name;
Backward they roll the long extent
Of ages infinite, and sing thy great descent.

No fabled Venus gave thee birth,
At Cyprus yet the goddess was not nam'd,
Nor at Idalia, nor at Paphos fam'd;
Nor yet was feign'd from foaming seas to rise;
For yet no seas appear'd, or fountains flow'd:
Nor yet distinguish'd in the skies,
Her radiant planet glow'd.

But thou wast long ere motion sprung its race,
Ere chaos and immeasurable space
Resign'd their useless rights to elemental place;
Before the sparkling lamps on high
Were kindled up, and hung around the sky;
Before the sun led on the circling hours,
Or vital seeds produc'd their active pow'rs;
Before the first intelligences strung
Their golden harps, and soft preludiums sung
To Love, the mighty cause whence their existence
sprung,

Th' ineffable DIVINITY,
His own resemblance meets in thee.
By this thy glorious lineage thou dost prove
Thy high descent; for G O D himself is L O V E.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R VIII.

From Sylviana; giving an account of her manner of life before her marriage with the Earl of —.

Madam,

YOUR curiosity is very obliging, in desiring to know my manner of life, till I had the honour of being married to my Lord —. The account indeed would be perfectly insignificant without that circumstance; it is only my relation to him that gives me a concern for the decorum and propriety of my conduct, in the high station to which he has advanced me.

I must own, that my scrupulous dissent from some fashionable freedoms makes my behaviour appear somewhat singular and precise among the gallant part of the world; but I hope, in this general toleration, I may, with indemnity, be a Christian, (though not a prude), at sixteen. If this is an error, the prejudice of education must be my excuse, which keeps me from giving my assent to many of the genteel maxims of the age. Nor will you be surprised at my nicety, when you know by what strict precepts the early part of my life has been governed.

My father was a country-clergyman, a person of exemplary piety; who, with a benefice of three hundred a-year, treated his poor parishioners with great hospitality, and made a decent provision for his own family. My mother was bred a dissenter; and continued such, till either her esteem for my father, or the force of his arguments, prevailed with her to join in communion with the national church.

I was the eldest of three daughters, which were all the children they had. We were carefully instructed in the rules of justice and truth; and bred in the greatest sanctity of manners. No excuse, but sickness, ever detained us on Sundays from the public worship; nor were the intervals spent in any idle amusements. The whole day was sacred,

and observed with a just solemnity. Through the rest of the week, prayers were constantly read mornings and evenings in the family; nor would my mother ever suffer cards or dancing in the house.

My two sisters were the prettiest demure things that ever were seen. They applied themselves with great diligence to assist my mother in any of her domestic concerns: But my temper being more sprightly, housewifery and plain work were my aversion. Reading was my prevailing attachment; and I had turned over every book in my father's library, except Latin and Greek. But here was not one play or novel for my entertainment. However, I was supplied with amusements of this kind by my Lady Worthy's youngest daughter; who was our neighbour, and was pleased to honour me with some degree of intimacy. But I perused these authors with great secrecy, and not without some inward remorse; this sort of reading being against my father's severe injunctions, and the pious rules I had been taught.

This was my manner of life till I was fifteen; when a brother of my mother's, a Turkey merchant, died, and, having no child, left me twenty thousand pounds, with only some small legacies to my sisters. This advance of fortune gave me some distinction with my Lady Worthy; who, about the same time, had a fine summer-house painting. The story was, Diana hunting with her nymphs. Her Ladyship desired my mother, that I might be drawn for one of the virgin-train.

Some time after this painting was finished, my Lord ——— came accidentally into these parts of the country; and waiting on my Lady Worthy, as they were in the summer-house, he took particular notice (I know not why) of the nymph for whom I had sat to the painter. Her Ladyship finding my Lord a little inquisitive, ordered a servant to call me to drink tea with them. I obeyed, without the least suspicion what was the motive of her command.

I had hitherto looked on every mortal man with equality and indifference; nor found any thing to answer the description of poetical heroes, and dramatic beaux; but the moment I saw my Lord, every grace, every charm, appeared real, which before had pleased my imagination in agreeable fictions. The enchanting form, the fatal glance, the resistless smile, the gentle, the prevailing accent, Love with his whole artillery seemed to insult me, and never more entirely subdued a mind so artless and unexperienced. However, to conceal my disorder, I withdrew as soon as the company would permit.

But how transformed was my soul from that guiltless calm I had till now enjoyed! The equality of my temper was broken. My thoughts had all a different turn. I went to church indeed; but said my prayers as mechanically as a clock strikes. I joined in singing the psalms; but with no more understanding than the chimes repeat a tune to which they are set. Not only the next world, but this, was effaced from my memory. There were no flowers in the field, nor stars in the sky. My whole attention was fixed on the lovely youth; his idea was still in view; or if any other object interrupted the pleasing reverie, it was only to give me vexation. I was angry with every mortal for not looking so handsome, nor talking so agreeably, as the charming man I admired.

* I was some tedious days in suspense, whether my Lord had one favourable thought of me: but my doubts were agreeably satisfied, when I found he had desired my Lady Worthy to procure my father's consent, in order to make his addresses to me. My father embraced the offer, with a just sense of the honour that was done him.

For my part, I had never practised any disguise; and was unacquainted with all forms, but such as were the dictates of nature and virtue: nor was it possible for me to conceal the tender inclination; it was as visible in my silence, as the most pathetic words could have made it. After I knew my
Lord's

Lord's character, and was convinced of his affection for me, I had a sort of vanity in owning a sense of his merit. This, I thought, justified the height of my passion: nor could I find any reason to violate my native sincerity, and affect indifference, where it would have been a crime to have been really insensible.

My noble lover expressed some impatience to conclude the affair; which was done with great secrecy and expedition. He suffered but one servant to attend him; and was so obliging, to stay a month after our marriage in my father's family. The scenes of low-life were a diverting novelty to him; while love and innocence made the hours glide smoothly on. This period was all pastoral and romantic. The golden age seemed to be renewed with Ovid's *Oenone*. I could have wished the noble youth divested of his hereditary honours; possessed only of a snowy flock, and graced with no distinction, but that of the *lovely swain*.

Then unmolested we had liv'd, and free
From those vexatious forms which greatness brings;
While rocks and meadows, shades and purling
springs,
The flow'ry valley and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no superior name to Love.

However, I did not yet know the toils of grandeur; nor feel the effects of my splendid vassalage. I lived my own way, dressed and undressed myself. My mother, since the advance of my fortune, had kept me in fine lace-caps, and clean silk night-gowns; and, as I had plenty of flaxen hair falling into natural curls, my dress was easily adjusted, and seemed to please my Lord exceedingly. The little waiting on I had was by Cicely, my mother's head-servant. I had no notion of the *grand meads*, nor the part I was to act in it.

I had never seen London. The Mall, Hyde-park, the Drawing room, and Theatre, were less known to me than the planetary worlds.

In this state of nature, of darkness, and original

nal simplicity, imagine to yourself what must be my perplexity, when my Lord carried me with him to make my first appearance in town, among the congratulations of his numerous friends! I found myself among a rank of people, to whose language, habits, and manners, I was as much a stranger, as if I had been in a foreign country.

My Lord had desired a sister, who lived with him, to procure every thing proper for me to appear with: and she spared no cost in jewels, or whatever else vanity itself could wish. She had been solicitous in her choice of a woman and chambermaid for me; and they were really two of the finest people I had ever seen in my life. My woman (being much older than myself) I looked on as my superior; and could hardly forbear making an apology for the trouble I gave her. I spoke to her in very gentle and submissive terms: nor was it possible for me to get rid of the secret veneration, which the gravity of her countenance gave me. However, my lively temper was apt to make some gay excursions. When I was at first initiated in the mysteries of dress, I was not quite so serious, as she seemed to think the importance of the affair required.

While my head was dressing, I was merely passive, as long as Mrs Dupin suffered me to sit reading. I left the ball on my shoulders to be adorned as she thought fit; which, after two hours toil, I sometimes found swelled to such an enormous size, with flowers, feathers, and bits of ribband, that I could not help begging her to reduce it to a dimension more agreeable to my shape; which, being slender, did not require a globe of that magnitude to adorn it.

But I was generally more inclined to cry than laugh on this occasion. The hours thus spent were an insupportable fatigue to me: nor could I answer to my conscience for such a vain expence of time. My being had a superior end; I was formed for immortality; which grand concern forbid me spending more hours at the toilet, than in
my

my devotions. I had been taught these antiquated maxims; and however ridiculous they might appear in the gay moments of health, the approaches of death, I knew, would set them in their full force, and unquestioned evidence.

However, I had no design in dressing, but to please my Lord. It was only with regard to him, I was concerned for the figure I made in public. The flattery I heard on my beauty, gave me more confusion than joy: nor could I account for the design of those addresses.

I very innocently told a beau that followed me, that I was married: at which he burst into a loud laugh. It was some surprise to me, to find him so gay, at the discovery of what I thought would have sunk him into despair. I could not but wonder, that the man who had just before been languishing and dying, should be so overjoyed to find his pretensions lost, and his case hopeless: for I really thought he made love with an honest intention to marry me, only he had mistaken my circumstances.

My next lover was the most intimate friend my Lord had. The fine things he said, I took for raillery. Indeed it appeared ill jesting with such sacred things as friendship, and the honour of a family. However, I concealed his extravagance; and treated him with a coldness so real and unaffected, that he soon recovered himself.

But you may easily imagine what a sound these gallant proposals must have to one so unacquainted with the modish world; and who had never heard those vices named, but with terms of infamy and reproach.

After this account of myself, you will not wonder to find me so little at ease in the high station to which I am raised. With what regret do I look back to the inglorious shades, the humble scenes of my past tranquillity! I was a stranger to ambition; but love seduced me from those peaceful retreats, where my first happy days were spent. It is only my affection for my Lord, that helps me to support
this

this illustrious bondage, this splendid misery. But, as sincerely as I love him, I cannot, without a sigh, recall the harmless freedom, the unmolested innocence, in which the earliest part of my life was past ; and am surprised to find myself the object of most people's envy, while in reality I merit their compassion. I am, without ceremony,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

To Mr A———.

I Have been contemplating on the period of all human glory, among the tombs in Westminster-Abbey. Here the most towering ambition finds its limits : insulting Death has fixed the bounds, and pronounced the imperial mandate, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther ;* and, *Here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* The wildest boasts of mortal vanity yield to the dreadful conqueror ; the glory of nature, with all the accomplishments of art, are humbled together in the dust.

Here, in one horrid ruin, lies
The great, the fair, the young, the wise ;
Th' ambitious king, whose boundless mind
Scarce to a world could be confin'd,
Now, content with narrower room,
Lies crowded in this marble tomb ;
Death triumphs o'er the boasted state,
The vain distinctions of the great ;
Here in one common heap they lie,
And eloquent, in silence cry,
Ambition is but vanity !

And see, this sculptur'd tomb contains
Of beauty the abhorr'd remains ;
That face which none unmov'd could view,
Has lost th' enchanting rosy hue ;
Those once resistless sparkling eyes
No more can heedless hearts surprise ;

L 1

That

That form, which every charm could boast,
In loathsome rottenness is lost.

See there the youth, whose cheerful bloom
Promis'd a train of years to come;

Whose soft address, and graceful air,
Had scarce obtain'd the yielding fair,

When Fate derides th' expected joys,
And all his flatt'ring hope destroys.

There sleep the bards, whose lofty lays
Have crown'd their names with lasting praise;

Who, though eternity they give,

While heroes in their numbers live;

Yet these resign their tuneful breath,

And wit must yield to mightier death.

Even I, the lowest of the throng,

Unskill'd in verse, or artful song,

Shall shortly shroud my humble head,

And mix with them among the dead.

I am now reconciling myself to these gloomy a-
bodes. I would grow familiar, I would contract
an intimacy with death, in order to meet the
grisly phantom without consternation.

But what I am here contemplating, is only the
dark side of the prospect, which disappears when-
ever my thoughts turn to the bright reverse.
Death is then no more a meagre skeleton, followed
with a train of terrors, but comes in an angel's
form, with a gay retinue of heavenly loves and
graces; he comes the kind messenger of my liberty
and happiness, with a smiling aspect, beckoning
me away from these stormy regions, to the worlds
of unclouded light. The scenes of immortality
are opened before me; the palm, the starry crown,
with all the bright rewards of virtue, appear in
view. Oh; when will the happy period come,
which ends this mortal story! But my friendship
for you shall outlive the date of this transitory
existence, and be the same when I am no more,
after the formalities of this lower world,

Your humble servant,

THEOPHILUS.

L E T T E R

LETTER X.

To Lady ———, from a Sylph.

YOU will find this letter on a bank of violets, where I have often the pleasure to seat myself near you, unseen; and never fail of being entertained with that vivacity, and innocent wit, that sparkles in your conversation. However negligent you are of your invisible admirer, your earliest part of life has been my care: my services claim the pre-eminence of all my mortal rivals, and give me a right to make my pretensions, before your heart admits an earthly passion.

I have followed your early rambles over the flowery lawns, guarded you on the verge of murmuring streams, and screened your beauty from the sultry noon. I have fanned you with my golden plumes, and breathed the fragrance of the spring about you. By me the music of the groves has been improved, while I have joined with the feathered chorus to divert you; the nightingale, for you, has prolonged her melodious strain, and from some flowery spray entertained you with her nightly serenade.

These harmless gallantries, instead of molesting, have indulged your tranquillity; for mine is an affection suited to your guiltless inclination, and consistent with the most refined virtue. Indeed, this is the superior charm, the powerful attraction, that has gained you a celestial lover; those divine graces, those sparklings of goodness and generosity, that sacred impression of virtue Heaven has stamped on your soul, charm me beyond your lovely person; and yet I view your blooming beauty with delight, and find a guiltless transport in your smiles. I am captivated with those looks of benevolence and peace, which scatter universal joy and alacrity about you. The guiltless gaiety of your temper, and inoffensive wit divert me. I love to mimic the sweetness of your voice, and repeat

the charming accent in a thousand sportive echoes.

Were not the view of etherial beauty forbidden to any of mortal race, I might insult all human vanity, and defy the most glorious rival among the sons of men. Was I permitted to appear in the rosy bloom of celestial youth, with my golden zone, my purple-wings, and glittering tiara, I should outshine the most splendid birthnight-beau.

But I am not permitted to convince you of my superiority, till your date of mortal life is expired; and then, if you continue stedfast to the rules of virtue, you shall be mine by all the engagements of celestial love. I will lead you in triumph to the blissful fields, and charming bowers, surpassing the most poetical description of Cyprian groves, or Hesperian gardens. What you call palaces, and magnificent seats, are but dens, but dwellings in the dust, compared to the dazzling habitations of the aerial race. The region is for ever calm, the skies for ever unclouded.

No stormy winter enters there,
'Tis jovial spring through all the year.
Soft gales through groves of myrtle blow,
The streams o'er golden pebbles flow;
Fresh Youth and Love their sportive train
Lead o'er the ever-verdant plain;
Æthereal forms in bright array
Along the blissful current stray;
Or wander through Elysian groves,
Or banquet in the gay alcoves;
And oft in Amaranthine bow'rs,
Repose on fragrant beds of flow'rs,
While Music, with her soothing strains,
Warbles through all the woods and plains;
The hills, the dales, and fountains round,
With heav'nly harmony resound.

But numbers fail, human language loses its energy, and grows insipid, while I would paint the wonders of the immortal world; neither can I describe, nor will you be able to conceive, these transporting

transporting scenes, till the happy time comes when they shall be unveiled in surprising pomp before you. Till then, I am

Your invisible admirer,

ARIEL.

LETTER XI.

To Eusebius.

IT is with great pleasure I obey you, in discovering the present situation of my thoughts ; since the tranquillity I enjoy in this retirement, is partly owing to those pious principles you endeavoured to instil into my early youth.

You was well informed of my passion for Lady Diana — ; nor can you have forgot how many excuses I framed to my father, to prevent his design of sending me into foreign parts, till all events succeeded to my wish, and I was married to the charming maid. But the nuptial pomp was hardly past before death blasted my happiness, and snatched the lovely prize from my arms.

The only way I could then think of, to divert the violence of my grief, was travelling ; hoping, by a variety of objects, to efface the painful impression. Accordingly, I made the tour of France and Italy, amusing myself with whatever was grand or entertaining. I conversed with men of sense and merit, and sometimes was favoured with the society of women of distinguished beauty and reputation ; I indulged myself in all the little gaieties of life within the limits of reason and morality : but nothing could blot the image of my charming wife from my soul. I brought back my affection for the fair departed saint to the mournful mansion where I enjoyed and lost her.

But here, leisure and reflection had a better effect than a thoughtless series of diversions. Though my course of life had always been regular, and governed by the rules of sobriety ; yet till now I was a stranger (except in form) to any thing
of

of devotion ; nor had ever experienced the ineffable satisfaction of a virtuous mind in its secret addresses to the Supreme Being. My soul had not yet reflected on its own grandeur, nor considered itself formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

Those grave and sublime authors which were once the useless ornaments of my library, are now my serious entertainment. By these I have been directed to look beyond all the perishing scenes of nature, to that immutable state of happiness, which, after a short probation, attends the practice of virtue. My thoughts grow calm, my passions appeased, the goods and evils of time vanish into nothing, at the prospect of boundless and immortal pleasure.

The great temple of the skies, the spangled arch of heaven, is frequently the place of my devotion ; the open view of the gay creation, or the lonely solitude of a wood, inspire me with a sacred warmth. But oh ! when the propitious Divinity, by some divine emanation, makes me sensible of his presence, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world ! How tasteless, how insipid are all its amusements ! How calm, how peaceful, in those happy intervals, are the regions of my soul ! its wishes are answered, and all its desires appeased. I have enough, I ask no more. Can they languish for the streams, who drink at the overflowing fountain ! His benignity is better than life ; immortal pleasure is in his smiles ; and whom he favours, must be necessarily blessed.

Thus abstract from human things, I converse with the great Spirit of the universe, and, in the rapture of my thoughts, often address him in such soliloquies as these.

“ It is the dignity of my nature, oh Supreme
 “ of beings, to adore and praise thee ! But how
 “ art thou to be extolled by mortal man ? The
 “ language of paradise, the strains of immortality,
 “ fall short of thy perfections : the first-born sons
 “ of light lose themselves in blissful admiration,
 “ in

“ in search of thy excellency ; even they with si-
 “ lent ecstacy adore, while, veiled with ineffable
 “ splendor,

“ The bright, the blest Divinity is known,
 “ And comprehended by himself alone.

“ Who can conceive the extent of that power,
 “ which, out of nothing, brought materials for a
 “ rising world, and, from a gloomy chaos, bid the
 “ harmonious universe appear !

“ Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
 “ Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd.

Milton.

“ At thy word the pillars of the sky were
 “ framed, and its beauteous arches reared ; thy
 “ breath kindled the stars, adorned the moon
 “ with silver rays, and gave the sun its flaming
 “ splendor.

“ Thy glory in her silent course the moon,
 “ And nightly lamps in their obscure sojourn,
 “ The morning-star with its bright circlet crown'd,
 “ And early blushes of the day reveal ;
 “ The circling sun thy greatness manifests ;
 “ Whether ascending from the eastern wave,
 “ With dancing smiles he cheers the dewy fields ;
 “ Or mov'd to the zenith's lofty height,
 “ He blazes with transcendent glory round ;
 “ Or down the steep of heav'n he rolls amain,
 “ And ends his flaming progress in the sea ;
 “ From east to west thy grandeur he proclaims,
 “ And thro' his radiant kingdoms spreads thy praise.

“ Thou didst prepare for the waters their capa-
 “ cious bed, and set bounds to the raging billows ;
 “ by thee the hills were crowned with plenty, and
 “ the valleys dressed in their flowery pride ; the
 “ summer and winter, the shady night, and the
 “ bright revolutions of the day, are thine ; in all
 “ the wonderful effects of nature, we adore and
 “ confess thy power.

“ Thou rid'st upon the wild tempestuous wind,

" And flying storms obey thy potent voice ;
 " Sublime on clouds thy dark pavilion set,
 " With shades and gloomy majesty involv'd ;
 " Thy hands the pointed light'nings lance around,
 " While peals of thunder shake the firmament ;
 " At thy approach the kindling forests smoke,
 " And from their base the trembling mountains
 " start
 " The rivers ebb and flow at thy command,
 " Observe their wonted course, or run reverse ;
 " At thy rebuke the frightened waves divide,
 " And with stupendous motion backward roll
 " Their crystal volumes to their inmost spring.
 " Thou all things canst, thy mighty mandate
 " heard,
 " Necessity and nature are no more :—
 " Th' obedient elements resign their league,
 " And wonderful effects attest the God."

These, my dear friend, are the entertainments
 that brighten my solitude, and free my soul from
 its former engagements ; those fading graces, on
 which I once doted, vanish before a superior ex-
 cellence, as stars before the rising sun ; instead of
 repining, I adore, I justify the great dispensing
 Power, that has removed the darling of my affec-
 tions to fix them on immortal beauty, I have lost
 nothing amiable or attractive, but what is found
 with divine advantage in the fair Original.

I know you will congratulate me on this happy
 change. It must please you to find that your pious
 instructions, joined to the sanctity of your exam-
 ple, have not been entirely lost on,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

AMINTOR.

L E T T E R XII.

To the same.

Sir,

I Have obeyed your commands, in sending the
 inclosed. You will not require an apology, for
 an

an essay on this transporting subject. Joy and gratitude will speak, however disproportioned the expressions.

ON OUR SAVIOUR'S NATIVITY.

Victorious Love! how uncontroll'd thy pow'r!
How great thy triumph, on that glorious hour!
The high-rai'd thrones above look'd down to see
The vanquish'd God a captive led by thee.
His splendor in mortality disguis'd,
The principalities of heav'n surpris'd
Th' indulgent skies smil'd on the happy birth,
While peace and joyful wonder hush'd the earth,
Fly rigid winter, with thy horrid face,
And let the soft and lovely spring take place;
Oh! come, thou fairest season of the year,
With garlands deck'd, and verdant robes appear;
At once produce the summer's various cost,
Whatever sweets her flow'ry stores can boast:
Full canisters of Sharon's roses spread,
And dress with art th' illustrious Infant's bed;
Rise the gardens, search the painted fields,
For all the blooming glories nature yields.

But, O ye products of the earth! how poor,
To heav'n's enamell'd plains, are all your store!
Perpetual greens, and never-fading flow'rs,
Enrich with soft perfumes th' immortal bow'rs;
And yet he left the bright ethereal seats,
For these cold regions, and obscure retreats.

Be hush'd, ye winds, no angry tempests rove;
But sink in gentle whispers through the grove:
With all Arabia load your balmy wings,
And breathe the fragrance of ten thousand springs.

Begin, ye sweet musicians of the air!
Let nature all her soothing sounds prepare;
Let tuneful Art her various measures bring,
Each melting tone, and ev'ry warbling string;
Let psalt'ries, harps, and the loud cymbal ring;
Let the shrill trumpets raise their sprightly voice,
While Carmel, and high Lebanon rejoice.

He comes, O Jacob, thy long-promis'd King !
 Celestial envoys the glad tidings bring:
 O'er earth's wide compass to the distant main,
 With truth, and perfect justice, he shall reign,
 The sparkling skies shall tarnish and decay,
 The sun be quench'd, the stars shall fade away;
 But he shall rise with a propitious light,
 Stand at high-noon, and shine divinely bright.

I shall now leave you to your own sublimer contemplation on this unbounded theme, and subscribe myself

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant

AMINTOR.

L E T T E R XIII.

To a gentleman in France, from his sister ; giving him a relation of her lover's misfortunes.

My dear brother.

AS my passion for Valerius had in its beginning your approbation, you will not blame my constancy at a juncture when the unhappy youth has no other consolation. His misfortunes have brought those virtues into view, which in the height of prosperity he never found occasion to exert ; and as as his merit rises, you will not reproach me, in finding my attachment to him more steady and resolved than in the splendor of his fortune.

You know how much my father piques himself on his quality, and how averse he was, when you left us, to Valerius' proposal, on no other account but his being a citizen, though a man of great virtue and wealth. However, this last motive, after some deliberation, prevailed. I was suffered to receive his addresses, and every thing was preparing to celebrate the marriage.

Valerius had always behaved himself in so obsequious a manner to his father, that he put a considerable stock into his hands, which the young merchant had improved, by two or three successful voyages

voyages into Turkey ; so that it was in his power to make a settlement vastly above my fortune, and far beyond my father's expectation. But, while the lawyers were busy in drawing up the articles, an unexpected misfortune put a stop to the whole affair.

The father of Valerius was an honest man, but exceeding credulous ; and was (unknown to his son) drawn into many engagements for the debts of an extravagant brother, to whose interest the compassionate old man was too much attached. He soon found his error, being surprised with several arrests on his brother's account, for more than his whole estate could answer.

The unhappy youth was quickly informed of his father's distress, and flew to his relief with all the speed that filial piety could give. One of their friends who was present, told me, there never was a more moving interview. After a long pause of silent sorrow, the old gentleman charged his son, not to involve himself in any straits on his account, but leave him to suffer the effects of his own imprudence.

" I know (continued he) the happiness of
 " your life depends on your marriage with the
 " gentle Lemira, which will be entirely frustrated
 " by your being concerned in this affair ; nor is
 " your whole fortune sufficient to disengage me
 " from this confinement ; but death will soon bring
 " me a full discharge from a perplexity, into
 " which my too great credulity, and ill-placed
 " compassion has betrayed me. Yet this, and any
 " thing I can endure with fortitude, rather than
 " you shall ruin your own fortune to extricate
 " mine. Pray leave me, (said he) ; the concern
 " your looks discover, is at present my heaviest
 " affliction."

The sorrowful youth immediately withdrew ; and, sending for all the creditors, found that his whole stock, except what was at sea, added to his father's, would hardly do justice to many honest traders demands, who must be ruined, with their

families without satisfaction. But to whatever exigence he reduced himself, he resolved to discharge his father; which he soon accomplished by a handsome composition.

Valerius' whole dependence now was on the return of the Turkey fleet, where he had considerable effects. But my father was so angry with him for engaging in his father's affairs, that he forbid me ever seeing or thinking any more of him as a lover. Nor did the torrent of his adversity stop here; for within a few days he had intelligence, that two ships belonging to him, richly laden, were in their return taken by a Spanish pirate.

I was soon informed of this disaster, and writ immediately to Valerius, in the softest language that a passion like mine could dictate; and (to conceal nothing from you) I offered to marry him, and put into his possession that part of my fortune which was left by my aunt, entirely in my own power. If you should condemn this romantic instance of affection in me, you will certainly approve the conduct of my young philosopher, who, in this crisis of love and adversity, could act with such composure and true greatness of mind, as you will find expressed in the following letter.

" To Lemira.

" **T**HE distress I am in, too generous Lemira,
 " has not reduced me to such an abject dis-
 " position, as, by accepting the offer you make
 " me of your fortune, to betray you into a state
 " of necessity and contempt, on so low a motive
 " as my own interest. Far be such a selfish view
 " for ever from my soul! You wrong me, and
 " your own charms, if you think the passion they
 " have inspired, will suffer me to act any thing
 " unbecoming its grandeur. However my for-
 " tunes are sunk, my mind keeps its native eleva-
 " tion, and is untainted with any selfish or mer-
 " cenary design. If I loved you less, I might per-
 " haps

“ haps (abstract from your happiness) pursue my
 “ own, and leave you at leisure to repent your
 “ rashness, and curse the mercenary wretch that
 “ was the instrument of your ruin.

“ Your father has forbid you marrying me, on
 “ the forfeiture of his blessing; and shall I rob
 “ you of that, and bring the weight of a paternal
 “ curse on your head! Shall I seduce you from the
 “ affluence and splendor of fortune, to share in
 “ my distresses, and struggle with the inconve-
 “ niencies of low life! Could I see you reduced to
 “ want and obscurity, in hopes it might be a so-
 “ lace to my own misery; and lessen my lot of
 “ human cares! No: let me stand acquitted by
 “ heaven and earth of such baseness as this.

“ Will you call this coldness? will you term it
 “ indifference; and not rather the utmost effort
 “ of affection, the triumph of a generous passion?
 “ Oh, Lemira, you are dearer to me than life!
 “ next to Heaven I love you, in parting with
 “ you, I abandon every earthly joy; I quit my
 “ whole share of human happiness, and must sink
 “ into the last dejection, if religion did not sup-
 “ port me with its divine consolations.

“ And here the morning seems to break, a gleam
 “ of peace salutes me, some presaging hopes of a
 “ prosperous catastrophe smile through the dark-
 “ ness. Nothing is impossible to an almighty
 “ Power. There are virtues to which Heaven has
 “ annexed promises of a present retribution. It
 “ was in the practice of the great duties of mo-
 “ rality I fell into this extremity; and here the
 “ divine veracity has engaged itself to secure me.
 “ All events are in the hands of the Sovereign
 “ Disposer; his will makes nature and necessity;
 “ no obstacle puts a stand to his designs, or ob-
 “ structs the course of providence; perpetual be-
 “ neficence has not diminished his stores, nor are
 “ the springs of his mercy exhausted. I must own
 “ I have received some consolation from the ver-
 “ ses inclosed, which were written by one of my
 friends

" friends in very distressed circumstances. I must
 " bid you an unwilling adieu.

" Yours, &c.

" VALERIUS."

On the Divine VERACITY.

BE hush'd, my griefs; 'tis his almighty will,
 That rules the storms, that bids you all be still;
 Be calm, ye tempests, vanish ev'ry care,
 While with triumphant faith my soul draws near }
 To God in all the confidence of pray'r.
 He has not bid me seek his face in vain,
 Talk to the winds, or to the waves complain.
 He hears the callow ravens from their nest,
 By him their eager cravings are redrest;
 Young lions through the desert roar their wants,
 He marks them, and their wild petition grants;
 The gaping furrows thirst, nor thirst in vain,
 (Parch'd by the noon-day sun), for timely rain;
 With silent suits the fair declining flow'rs
 Request, and gain, the kind refreshing show'rs:
 And will th' almighty Father turn away,
 Nor hear his darling offspring when they pray?
 No breach of faithfulness his honour stains,
 With day and night his word unchang'd remains;
 The various ordinances of the sky
 Stand forth his glorious witnesses on high;
 Summer and winter, autumn, and the spring,
 For him by turns their attestations bring;
 Unblemish'd his great league with nature stands
 And full reliance on his truth demands:
 Nothing that breathes a second deluge fears,
 When in the clouds the radiant bow appears.

Can the Most High like man at random speak,
 Forfeit his honour, and his promise break?
 Does he that falsely swears, his vengeance claim?
 And shall he stain his own tremendous name?
 The earth, the heav'ns, were witness when he swore
 By his great Self; what would thy fears have more?
 And had a greater than himself been found,
 That greater had the high engagement bound.

Shall

Shall fleeting winds th' Almighty's word's dis-
 perse,
 Or breathing dust his solemn oath reverse?
 Can he like man, unconstant man, repent?
 Shall any chance, or unforeseen event,
 Start up, his settled purpose to prevent?
 Or can he fail in the expected hour,
 A stranger to his own extent of power?
 What profit can a worm his Maker bring,
 That he should flatter such a worthless thing?
 Why should he condescend to mind my tears,
 Or calm with soft deluding words my fears?
 Can he (of perfect happiness possess)
 Deride the woes that human life molest,
 Or mock the hopes that on his goodness rest?
 Nature may change her course, confusion reign,
 And men expect the rising sun in vain:
 But should th' eternal truth and promise fail,
 Infernal night and horror must prevail;
 The thrones of light would shake: th' angelic
 pow'rs

Would stop their harps amidst the blissful bow'rs:
 No more the soft, the sweet melodious strain,
 Would gently glide along the happy plain;
 No more would tuneful hallelujahs rise,
 And shouts triumphant fill the sounding skies:
 Each heav'nly countenance a sullen air
 Of grief and anxious diffidence would wear;
 The golden palaces, the splendid seats,
 The flow'ry mansions and the soft retreats,
 The rosy shades, and sweet delicious streams,
 Would disappear like transitory dreams.

Angels themselves their brightest hopes recline
 On nothing more unchangable than mine.
 Am I deceiv'd? what can their charter be?
 Fair seraphim may be deceiv'd like me,
 If goodness and veracity divine,
 Can fail, their heav'n's an airy dream like mine.

But, Oh! I dare the glorious venture make,
 And lay my soul and future life at stake;
 Be earth, be heav'n, at desp'rate hazard lost,
 If here my faith should prove an empty boast!

Whate'er

Whate'er your arts ye pow'rs of hell, suggest,
 The truth of God undaunted I attest.
 Produce your annals with insulting rage,
 Bring out your records, shew the dreadful page,
 One instance where th' Almighty broke his word,
 Since first the race of men his name ador'd;
 In gloomy characters point out the hour,
 Exert your malice, summon all your pow'r;
 With rites infernal all your pomp display,
 And mark with horror the tremendous day.
 Confus'd, you search your dreadful rolls in vain,
 Th' eternal honour shines without a stain,
 Unblemish'd shines in men and angels view.
Just are thy ways, thou King of saints, and true!

I inclosed this letter, my dear brother, to show you with what equality of mind the generous youth behaves himself in this distress. I beg you would hasten your return to England, in compassion to

Your unhappy friend and sister,

LEMIRA.

L E T T E R XIV.

To Herminius.

I Have just reason to fear my essay on this noble subject will not answer your expectation. With whatever fluency I could express myself, when inspired by mortal beauty, the pomp of language fails me here; the boldest figures lose their emphasis, and grow insipid on this superior theme.

DIVINE LOVE.

FOR thee, fond Love, my darling theme,
 My lute has oft been strung;
 Thy pow'r, by ev'ry answ'ring stream,
 In gentle notes I sung.
 Laurinda taught my muse her art,
 And fill'd with tender fires my heart;
 She taught me how to paint thy beauteous face,
 Thy charming form, and ev'ry moving grace.

But

But who shall guide the daring strain,
Celestial Love ! that aims at thee,
Thou fairest offspring of the Deity ?
I call the pow'rs of harmony in vain ;
In vain the softest accents I employ ;
The brightest metaphors in vain I chuse,
With all the melting language lovers use
To tell their pain, or speak their rising joy.

All the heights of pure desire,
Holy love, and heav'nly fire,
At once my panting breast inspire :
Such ardour smiling martyrs know,
When, defying ev'ry foe,
In triumph on to death they go,

Tell me, thou, for whom I prove,
All the fierce extremes of love,
How thy charms, so far retir'd
From mortal sense, have all my bosom fir'd.
Greatness and fame, beauty and harmony,
Are all but empty names compar'd with thee.

Be thou but mine,
The whole creation I at once resign.

Vanish, thou earth, and ev'ry gaudy scene
Of hill and dale, or grove, or flow'ry field,
When by the spring adorn'd with cheerful green ;
Vanish whate'er delights thou else canst yield :
Thou sun, be dark ; and let eternal night
Conceal thy vital splendor from my sight :
Thou moon, and ev'ry gay ethereal fire,

Burn out your golden store :
I shall be blest'd, when all your lights expire,
And earth, and sea, and skies shall be no more !

Place me where infernal night,
And endless horror reign ;
Where, banish'd far from hope and light
Unhappy ghosts complain :
Ev'n there, one gentle smile of thine
Th' eternal gloom would chase ;
Immortal day would on me shine,
And pleasure fill the place.

Should heav'n surround me with full tides of joy,
 And open all its glories to my sight,
 One frown of thine would all that heav'n destroy,
 And wither my delight ;
 One frown of thine th' immortal groves would blast,
 And darkness o'er the blissful regions cast.

You that sing in happy bow'rs,
 And in unmingled pleasures pass the hours,
 That know the height of heav'nly bliss,
 Come, play me some soft air of paradise ;
 Gently strike your sweetest strings,
 And touch my soul on all its tender springs,
 While rising on the music's downy wings,
 I'll bid at once mortality adieu,
 And love and paint the sacred flame like you.

But, my dear Herminius, the present performance will convince you, that I have not yet learned the strains of immortality : and perhaps you will not think it necessary for me to make an apology for not being an angel. However, if I can contribute to your entertainment as a mere mortal, you may command,

Your most humble servant,

EVANDER.

L E T T E R XV.

To Alonzo.

YOU have spent so many happy hours at the Earl of ———'s fine seat in the country, that it is unnecessary to describe those beautiful scenes, with which you are so well acquainted. Here I have passed a great part of the summer-season, in a manner suited to my contemplative humour. Having no taste for country-diversions, or any kind of rural sports, my pleasures were confined to the charming shades and gardens with which the house is surrounded.

Here I enjoyed an unmolested tranquillity, till a fit of curiosity led me to make an excursion into
 the

the wide champaign, that opened before me from the borders of the park.

If I begin with the rosy dawn, you will pardon my romantic style, in relating the surprising adventure. But, without telling a lie, the morning was yet dusky; the balmy dew, and fragrant gales perfumed the air with their untainted sweets; while, with thoughts free as the airy songsters that warble on the branches, I wandered from rising hills to winding vales, through flowery lawns to leafy woods, till I found myself under the shade of a venerable row of elms; which put me in mind of Sir Roger de Coverly's rookery. The aged trees shot their heads so high, that, to one who passed under them, the crows and rooks, which rested on their tops, seemed to be cawing in another region. I was delighted with the noise; while, with the Spectator, I considered it as a kind of natural prayer to that being who supplies the wants of his whole creation. My thoughts were inspired with a pleasing gratitude to the beneficent Father of the universe; till the sequel of my devotion was interrupted by the sight of a beautiful girl, about four or five years old, sitting on the grass, with a basket of flowers in her lap; which she was sticking in the snowy fleece of a little lamb that stood tamely by her.

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or some pretty phantom that haunted the grove; For the adjacent house, belonging to this reverend avenue, looked more like a dormitory for the dead, than an habitation for the living. Every thing about it appeared ruinous and desolate. I could neither hear the voice, nor trace the steps of mortal men in this absolute solitude: nor had I any hopes of knowing into what wild region I was got, unless the pretty figure sitting on the grass could give me some intelligence.

I made my approaches very respectfully. But what was my surprise, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful Aurelia, on whom I once so pas-

sionately doted! A thousand tormenting ideas rushed into my mind at the sight of this lovely creature, who smiled on me with the most enchanting innocence. While I stood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, Aurelia herself entered the walk, and confirmed my suspicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

It is about six years since she eloped from the public view, regardless of her own illustrious family, or the obligations she was under to the generous Cleone; who treated her with the utmost confidence, and was the last that suspected her husband's criminal affair with her.—Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which she treated whatever proposals honour, and a disinterested passion, could make.

I found her now an object of pity, rather than resentment. The dejection of her mind was visible in her pale haggard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly persuade myself this was the celebrated thing, that once appeared in all public places with such a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmost confusion at this interview; till, excusing myself, I told her this intrusion was undesigned, and purely the effect of chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ———'s, where I had spent some time; and that she might depend on my word, not to discover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time she was a little composed; and invited me to rest myself after my walk. I followed her into the house, which looked more like the mansions of despair, than a retreat for a lady of pleasure. An awful silence reigned in every room, through which I made a shift to find my way by a dim twilight, that glimmered through some windows of as antique a figure as those of an old abbey. The furniture, I fancy, has not been displaced from times immemorial; it looks more like unwieldy lumber, than any thing designed for use
or

or ornament. There was nothing of a modern date, but a tea-table, and that in ruinous circumstances.

It was now about ten o'clock. Aurelia ordered tea and chocolate to be brought. All her attendance was a fresh-coloured country lass; who withdrew as soon as we had breakfasted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of Aurelia's misfortunes; but durst not ask any question, for fear it would look like insulting her distress; only renewed my excuses for interrupting her privacy.

To which she replied, "That though I was the
"last person in the world she should have chose to
"be a witness of her infamy, yet she thought herself
"happy, in having an opportunity to make
"some apology for her injustice to me, in refusing
"those terms of honour I once offered, and
"complying with such reproachful conditions
"as had made her the most miserable creature on
"earth.

"It was my criminal inclination (continued
"she) for Cassander that made me inflexible to
"your intreaties, and my father's commands to
"marry you. But whatever wrong this was to
"your merit, my guilt, with regard to the generous
"Cleone, is of a higher nature. The intrigue I had
"with her husband, was attended with circumstances
"of the blackest treachery. I had broke through the
"tenderest engagements of friendship, and granted all
"that my dissolute lover could ask; when, finding myself with
"child, to hide my infamy, he brought me to this
"dismal place, an old mansion-house belonging to
"his family; where I am cut off from all human
"society, except two or three stupid peasants, his tenants,
"who reside in some part of this Gothic structure.
"It is now six years since I have breathed and slept
"(for I cannot call it living) in this melancholy
"confinement, without hopes of a release, being
"entirely dependent on Cassander's allowance and
"caprice, who but too well knows his own power,
"and my folly;
"which

“ which makes him, instead of the humble lover,
“ act the imperious tyrant. His visits are seldom,
“ his stay short, and I am left whole months to
“ languish alone in a detested solitude.

“ This child, (continued she, weeping, and
“ taking the lovely creature in her arms), this
“ child, which might have been my joy, proves
“ my greatest affliction. Should I die, she is im-
“ mediately abandoned to hardship and necessity ;
“ should I live, it distracts me to think she may
“ follow my scandalous example. How can I give
“ her instructions to avoid those vices which my
“ practice approves ? Or recommend that virtue
“ whose sacred rules I have so openly violated ?
“ And still I love this worthless man. Were I pe-
“ nitent, could I resolve on a reformation, this
“ leisure and retirement would be a blessing, an
“ advantage to me : but I am obstinate in guilt,
“ while I despair of happiness in this world, or in
“ the next. Till I came hither, my hours were
“ spent in frolic and gaiety. A constant series
“ of diversions shortened the days, and gave wings
“ to the jovial hours, which now have leaden feet,
“ and burdened with grief, lag heavily along.
“ No sort of reflection gives me joy. Whether
“ I look backward or forward, all is darkness
“ and confusion. I am no way qualified for re-
“ tirement. Books are my aversion, thinking is
“ my horror : I am weary of living, and afraid to
“ die !”

I heard this account with a heart full of
compassion, and said what I could to persuade her
to break off this criminal commerce with Cassander,
and throw herself on the care of Providence, and
the generosity of her friends. But I had too much
value for my own peace, and too great a contempt
for a woman of Aurelia's character, to make any
particular proposals for her freedom ; and, bidding
her adieu, hastened back to the Earl's, without say-
ing one word of my adventure ; - which I commit
to your secrecy, and subscribe myself,

Your most humble servant,

POLYDORE.

LETTER XVI.

Rosamond to Henry II.

Imitated from DRAYTON.

READ o'er these lines, the records of my shame,
If thou canst suffer yet my hateful name.
Clean as this spotless page, till stain'd by me.
Such was my conscience, till seduc'd by thee.
Chaste were my thoughts, and all serene within;
Till mark'd by thee with characters of sin.
Had some successful lover, in the prime
Of equal years, betray'd me to a crime,
Resistless love had been my best defence,
And gain'd compassion for the soft offence:
But while thy wither'd age had no such charms,
To tempt a blooming virgin to thy arms,
I'm justly thought a prostitute for gold,
A mercenary thing to sordid int'rest sold.

Be curs'd that female fiend, whose practis'd art,
With wanton tales, seduc'd my guiltless heart.
Let her with endless infamy be curs'd;
Of all the agents hell employs, the worst.
Perdition to herself the wretch insur'd,
When she my youthful modesty allur'd.
Oft, fatal day! when, to my virtue's wrong,
I fondly listen'd to her flatt'ring tongue,
But, oh! more fatal moment, when she gain'd
That vile consent which all my glory stain'd!

Yet Heav'n can tell, with what extreme regret,
The fury of thy lawless flames I met;
For, unexperienc'd in the ways of sin,
A conscious honour struggled still within.
Oh, could I! but the ill-tim'd wish is vain,
Could I my former innocence regain!
Thy proser'd kingdom, Henry, were a prize,
Which, balanc'd with that wealth, I should despise.
But I no more my sex's pride can boast:
Alas! what has one moment's madness cost!

Not Woodstock's charming bow'rs can ease my
grief,
For I must fly myself to find relief.

Oft,

Oft, while the sun in length'ning shades declines,
And through the waving trees more mildly shines,
Alone, through all the beauteous walks I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove :

But, at my sight, each verdant prospect wears
A gloomy view, and ev'ry plant appears
To bend its top, o'ercharg'd with dewy tears.
Methinks each painted blossom hangs its head,
Avoids my touch, and withers where I tread.

If angling near a crystal brook I stand,
And with deluding skill the bait command,
The cautious fish, that fly the snare, upbraid
My heedless youth more easily betray'd.

Amidst the garden, wrought by curious hands,
A noble statue of Diana stands.

Naked she stands, with just proportions grac'd,
And bathing in a silver fountain plac'd.

When near the flow'ry borders I advance,
At me she seems to dart an angry glance.

What scenes, alas, can please a guilty mind !

What joy can I in these recesses find,

For lawless and forbidden love design'd !

In some obscure and melancholy cell,

Rather a weeping penitent I'd dwell,

Than here a glorious prostitute remain,

To all my sex's modesty a stain.

This stately lab'rinth, rais'd with vast expence,
Displays my shame in its magnificence.

As through the stately rooms I lately walk'd,

And with my woman of its paintings talk'd,

She spy'd the draught of Tarquin's wanton flame,

And heedless ask'd the injur'd beauty's name.

This (I reply'd) is that illustrious dame—

Renown'd for chastity I should have said :

But here a rising blush my face o'erspread.

Confus'd I stopp'd, and left th' inquiring maid.

Lucretia's story on my life had cast

A black reproach who yet can live disgrac'd.

I should, like her, with just resentment prest,

Have plung'd the fatal dagger in my breast.

What specious colours can disguise my sin,
Or still the restless monitor within ?

Thy

Thy greatness, Henry, but augments my shame,
 And adds immortal scandal to my name;
 My odious name, which, as the worst disgrace,
 The Clifford's cancel from their noble race!

To what propitious refuge shall I run,
 The terrors of a guilty mind to shun?
 In vain the sun its morning-pride displays;
 I turn my eyes and sicken at its rays:
 The silver moon, and sparkling stars, by night,
 Torment me too with their officious light;
 The glimm'ring tapers round my chamber plac'd,
 Across the room fantastic shadows cast:
 Of all my dreams, the melancholy scene
 Presents an injur'd, a revengeful Queen,

Last night, when sleep my heavy eyes had clos'd,
 To all her rage, methought, I stood expos'd!
 Wild were her looks, a poison'd cup she brought,
 And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught.
 The destin'd bowl I took with trembling hands,
 Compell'd to execute her fierce commands.
 This dismal omen aggravates my fears,
 Before my fancy still the furious Queen appears.

LETTER XVII.

Mary Queen of France, to Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk.

The Princess Mary, Henry VIII.'s younger sister, being in love with the Duke of Suffolk, was, for public reasons, married to Lewis XII. of France, who died in six months after. The Queen being again at liberty, writes the following epistle to the Duke of Suffolk, her first lover.

An imitation of DRAYTON's epistle.

LET these soft lines my kindest thoughts convey,
 And tell thee what I suffer by thy stay.
 Did seas divide us, this might well excuse,
 Thy negligence, and my fond heart abuse:
 But Calais from the Kentish strand is seen;
 A gentle current only rolls between.

Nor needs my Suffolk, like Leander, brave
A threatning death in ev'ry breaking wave,
When, guided only by a glimm'ring light,
He cross'd the stormy Hellespont each night.
Tall ships, with flying sails, and lab'ring oars,
Attend to land thee on the Gallic shores,
But thou art chang'd! that ardour is expir'd
Which once thy wishes with impatience fir'd,
When Savoy's blooming Duchess strove in vain
From me the conquest of thy heart to gain.
Invited by great Henry's martial fame,
The haughty princess, with her brother, came
To compliment the King for Tournay gain'd;
Where, in a rich pavilion entertain'd,
Thy noble form th' unguarded fair surpris'd,
Nor were her tender wishes long disguis'd.
Whatever flatt'ry, love, or wanton art,
Could do, she practis'd, to seduce thy heart.
Great Antony, by such allurements gain'd,
For Cleopatra, all his glory stain'd.
But thy firm faith no injury receiv'd,
For you was just, or I was well deceiv'd.
Nor were my virgin vows less true to thee:
When young Castile address'd the Court for me,
The charms of proser'd empire I resign'd,
And all that could ambition move declin'd:
A softer passion had possess'd my mind;
And while unrivall'd in thy breast I reign'd,
My thoughts the lustre of a crown disdain'd.
But, ah! what changes human joys attend!
On airy chance our brightest hopes depend.
Victorious Henry's arms still meet success;
The vanquish'd Gauls at last propose a peace,
By Wolsey's policy their terms succeed,
And both the hostile nations are agreed,
While I the public victim am decreed;
Condemn'd to share the Christian Monarch's bed,
And curs'd with that magnificence I fled.
I know my rank no private choice allow'd,
And what a Princess to her country ow'd. [breast,
These splendid maxims should have sway'd my
But love entirely had my soul possess'd.

How

How oft I wish'd my humble lot had been
 Beneath the glorious hazard of a Queen !
 That crown'd by rural maids with painted flow'rs,
 I rang'd the fields, and slept in verdant bow'rs !
 Belov'd of some young swain with Brandon's face,
 His voice, his gesture, and his blooming grace !
 In all but birth and state resembling thee !
 Then unmolested had we liv'd, and free
 From those unhappy turns which greatness brings ;
 While rocks and meadows, shades and purling
 springs,
 The flow'ry valley and the gloomy grove,
 Had heard of no superior name to love.
 Such scenes of this inglorious life I drew,
 And half believ'd the charming fiction true,
 Till real ills dissolv'd the pleasing dreams ;
 The groves and valleys fled, the lawns and silver
 streams.

The gay fantastic paradise I mourn'd,
 While courts and factions, crowns and cares return'd.

With sighs I still recall the fatal day,
 When no pretence could gain a longer stay.
 The lovely Queen my parting sorrow saw,
 Nor Henry's presence kept my grief in awe :
 No rules of decent custom could controul,
 Or hide the wild disorder of my soul ;
 When shipp'd for France before the dancing wind
 The navy fled, and left my hopes behind.
 With weeping eyes I still survey'd the strand,
 Where on a rising cliff I saw thee stand ;
 Nor once from thence my stedfast sight withdrew,
 Till the lov'd object was no more in view,
 Farewell, I cried, dear charming youth ; with thee
 Each cheerful prospect vanishes from me.

Loud shouts and triumphs on the Gallic coast
 Salute me ; but the noisy zeal was last ;
 Nor shouts nor triumphs forc'd my least regard,
 Thy parting sighs, methought, was all I heard.
 But now at Abbeville by Lewis met,
 I strove the thoughts of Suffolk to forget :
 For here my faith was to a monarch vow'd,
 And solemn rites my passion disallow'd :

However pure my former flames had been,
Unblemish'd honour made them now a sin.
But scarce my virtue had the conquest gain'd,
And ev'ry wild forbidden with restrain'd,
When at St Denis, with imperial state
Invested, on the Gallic throne I sat ;
The day with noble tournaments was grac'd,
Your name among the British champions plac'd.
Invited by a guilty thirst of fame,
Without regard for my repose you came.
The lists I saw thee ent'ring with surprise,
And felt the dazzling glances of thine eyes.

Ye sacred Powers, (I cried), that rule above !
Defend my breast from this perfidious love.
Ye holy lamps ! before whose awful lights
I gave my hand ; and ye religious rites !
Assist me too ; nor let a thought unchaste,
Or guilty with my plighted honour blast :
While passion struggling with my pious fears,
Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears.
Some tender blossom thus, with leaves enlarg'd
Declines its head, with midnight dew o'ercharg'd :
The passing breezes shake the gentle flow'r,
And scatter all around a pearly show'r.
From this distracting hour I shunn'd thy sight,
And gain'd the conquest by a prudent flight.
But human turns, and sov'reign destiny,
Have set me now from these engagements free.
The stars propitious to my virgin-love,
My first desires, and early vows approve ;
While busy politicians urge in vain,
That public reasons should my choice restrain ;
That none but York's or Lancaster's high race,
Or great Plantagenet's, I ought to grace.
Nor Suffolk wants a long illustrious line,
And worth, that shall in future records shine.
They own'd thy valour, when thy conqu'ring lance
Carry'd the prize from all the youth of France.
Thy merit Henry's constant favour shows,
And envy only can my choice oppose.
Thy noble presence, wit, and fine address,
The British and the Gallic court confess.

Alençon's

Alençon's shape, and Vendome's sparkling eye,
 Count Paul's gay mien, and Bourbon's majesty,
 No longer are admir'd when thou art bye.
 There nothing wants to justify my flame,
 The statesmen grant, but a poor empty name.
 And what's the gaudy title of a King?
 What sort of bliss can royal grandeur bring?
 When thou art absent, what's the Court to me,
 But tiresome state, and dull formality?
 This toy, a crown, I would resign, to prove
 The peaceful joys of innocence and love.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Penelope to Ulysses.

From OVID.

Distracted with his stay, yet still the same,
 True to her ancient vows, and early flame,
 Penelope salutes her absent king.
 Oh! would himself at last an answer bring!
 Proud Troy is fall'n, our Grecian virgins hate:
 Yet not th' unrivall'd riches of her state,
 Nor all the glories of her monarch's throne,
 Can for the pains thy absence gives atone.
 Oh! had the waves that gently wafted o'er
 The lustful Phrygian to the Spartan shore,
 Plung'd in the deep the guilty load they bore!
 Abandon'd then I should not waste away,
 In unavailing moans the lazy day;
 Or lost to joy, and widow'd of delight, [night.
 Curse the dull lagging hours of the more tedious
 Fruitful of doubts, my love still fear'd for you
 Dangers unknown, and greater than the true.
 I thought all Troy conspir'd against thy head,
 And Hector's name, but mention'd, struck me dead.
 Trembling I heard of false Achilles slain,
 And wept to find the bold deceit was vain.
 Tlepolemus fell by the Lycian spear,
 Tlepolemus renewed my anxious care.
 In short, at every Grecian hero's fall,
 Thro' the long war, before the fatal wall,

A thrilling coldness ran through every part,
Chill'd up my blood, and shudder'd at my heart.
But my chaste passion mov'd the pitying skies ;
My Lord is safe, and Troy in ashes lies.
With prosp'rous gales the Argive chiefs return,
And to their country gods Barbaric incense burn.
The wives in pious gifts declare their joy,
While their sav'd husbands tell the fate of Troy :
Old men and frightened virgins, fix'd around,
In dumb amazement dwell upon the sound :
The soldiers in gay feasts their cares compose,
And mark in wine the scenes of ancient woes ;
This is Sigæum, here swift Simois flow'd,
There high erect old Priam's palace stood ;
Here fierce Pelides urg'd the dreadful war,
There fix'd the bleeding Hector to his car :
There mov'd Ulysses, certain of success,
Greater his conduct, nor his courage less :
'Twas Nestor told us all ; he told us too
The arts that Dolon and the Thracian slew.
Heedless, and too forgetful as you were,
In you, I'm sure, 'twas criminal to dare :
When you but for one faithful friend alone
Dealt fate to squadrons, and provok'd your own,
How well your wife and infant left behind,
How well your tender passion fill'd your mind !
I fainted as I heard the dreadful tale ;
Scarce your success could o'er my fears prevail.
But what success, what's ruin'd Troy to me,
Or all the savage joys of victory ?
If still unblest'd I sink beneath my pain,
And never must enjoy my Lord again !
For other wives destroy'd, to me still stands
The wall erected by immortal hands,
Now plenteous harvests grow where Ilium stood,
The soil well fatten'd with the natives blood.
O'er ruin'd palaces that reach'd the skies,
Low spires of grass, and humble shrubs arise.
Still of the conqueror's absence I complain,
Nor know what distant worlds my wand'ring Lord
detain.

Ulysses

Ulysses I of every ship require,
 The sailors with repeated questions tire :
 Hopeless and half-despairing yet I write ;
 The cruel powers, that envy me delight,
 May bring at least my letters to your sight.
 To Pylos, ancient Nestor's fruitful reign,
 And Sparta's injur'd court, I sent in vain ;
 For nor from Sparta, nor from Pylos came,
 Ought save wild rumours, and uncertain fame.
 Again I wish'd Troy's lofty tow'rs might rise,
 And curse the thoughtless vows that gain'd the skies.
 War's hazards then would be my only care,
 And I in common with a thousand fear :
 Now all the dangers of the land and seas
 Are present to my thoughts, and banish ease ;
 While you, alas ! perhaps with pleasure rove,
 And faithless nourish a forbidden love ;
 Take some deluding harlot to your breast,
 And in her arms with lawless transports blest'd,
 Make my dull easy constancy your jest.
 Ye pow'rs ! avert the thought I cannot bear,
 And give my vain suspicions to the air,
 Whate'er may be the reasons of thy stay,
 Oh ! mayst thou never willingly delay !
 Me to a second choice my fire invites,
 Chides my delays, and urges all his rights,
 Still let him urge, my love my faith assures ;
 I am, I must, I will be ever yours.
 Yet my warm pray'rs the good old monarch move,
 He views my tears, and mourns my hapless love.
 But a vile train of thoughtless youths proclaim
 With lawless impudence a saucy flame.
 Hither from Zante and Samos they resort,
 And revel unmolested in thy court.
 Treasures, the purchase of thy blood, they seize :
 Those spoils Eurymachus, Pylander these ;
 Antinous here with equal rage possess'd,
 There greedy Polybus, a constant guest,
 Plunder around—And need I name the rest,
 Who in your absence on our vitals prey,
 And waste in costly luxury the day ?

The

The beggar Irus, a detested name,
 And base Melanthus last, complete thy shame.
 'Gainst these insults what force can I employ !
 What thy old father, or thy tender boy ?
 For his dear life a thousand snares are laid,
 And certain ruin aim'd at his unguarded head.
 Preserve him, Heaven ! and if we ne'er must join,
 Yet may he live to close your eyes and mine.
 In vain Laertes does his power oppose,
 Unfit for war, against surrounding foes.
 Telemachus will soon to fame aspire,
 Now his soft years a parent's aid require.
 Oh ! thou, our only hope and refuge, come,
 Dispel our dangers, and avert our doom ;
 Form the young hero in the arts of war,
 To rival thee, but with more caution dare.
 Hasten, and relieve your sire with years oppress'd :
 Once more he longs to clasp you to his breast,
 Then shake off tedious life, and sink to rest. }
 Oh ! haste to me !——A little longer stay
 Will every grace, each fancy'd charm decay :
 Increasing cares, and time's resistless rage,
 Will waste my bloom, and wither it to age ;
 Yet at thy sight wild joys, and sprightly love,
 Shall dying youth recall, and every charm improve.

SIX LETTERS from LAURA to AURELIA.

*Giving an account of her brother's criminal amour,
 and her own passion for the handsome hermit.*

L E T T E R I.

COULD your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in London, you had been free from the vexation that I shall certainly give you, by making you the confident of all my country adventures ; and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling me what the dear, bewitching, busy world is doing, while I am idly sauntering away my time in rural shades. How happy are you, my dear Aurelia ! How I envy you the enjoyment

ment of dust, of crouds and noise, with all the polite hurry of the *beau-monde* !

My brother brought me hither to see a country-seat he has lately purchased. He would fain persuade me it is finely situated ; but I should think it more finely situated in the Mall, or even in Cheapside, than here. Indeed I hardly know where we are ; only that it is at a dreadful distance from the theatre-royal in Drury-lane, from the opera, from the masquerade, and every thing in this world that is worth living for.

I can scarce tell you whither to direct your letters. We are certainly at the ends of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the limits of the habitable globe, under the polar star, among wild people and savages. I thought we should never have come to the end of our pilgrimage ; nor could I forbear asking my brother, if we were to travel by dry land to the antipodes. Not a mile but seemed ten, that carried me from London, the centre of all my joys.

The country is my aversion ; I hate trees and hedges, steep hills, and silent valleys. The satyrists may laugh : but to me,

Green fields, and shady groves, and crystal springs,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious things.

I had rather hear London cries, with the rattle of coaches, than sit listening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the wild music of the woods. The smell of violets gives me the hysterics ; fresh air murders me ; my constitution is not robust enough to bear it ; the cooling zephyrs will fan me into a catarrh, if I stay here much longer.

If these are the seats of the muses, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimsies, and converse with the visionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for dryades and fairies, nor the least prejudice to human society ; a mere earthly beau, with an embroidered coat, suits my
P p taste

taste better than an aerial lover with his shining tresses, and rainbow-wings.

The sober twilight, which has employed so many soft descriptions, is with me a very dull period; nor does the moon (on which the poets dote) with all her starry train, delight me half so much as an assembly-room, illuminated with wax-candles. This is what I should prefer to the glaring sun in his meridian splendour. Day-light makes me sick; it has something in it so common and vulgar, that it seems fitter for peasants to make hay in, or country-lasses to spin by, than for the use of people of distinction.

You pity me, I know, dear Aurelia, in this deplorable state. The whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyless and desolate. In whatever gay images the muses have dressed these rustic abodes, I have not penetration enough to discover them: not the flowery field, nor spangled sky, the rosy morn, or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts. I am neither a religious nor poetical enthusiast; and without either of these qualifications, what should I do in silent retreats, and pensive shades?

I find myself little at ease in this absence of the noisy diversions of the town. It is hard for me to keep up my spirits in leisure and retirement. It makes me anxiously inquisitive what will become of me when my breath flies away. Death, that ghastly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my solitude; and in some doleful knell from a neighbouring steeple, often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves and gloomy sepulchres. These dismal subjects put me in the vapours, and make me start at my own shadow; nor have I acquired any great degree of fortitude by turning freethinker, and unlearning,

“All that the nurse and all the priest have taught.”

Mr Pope.

You have been too often of our party, not to know my brother is a very infidel. He has a sort of vanity in making me a proselyte, and freeing
my

my mind from those prejudices (as he calls them) and superstitious notions, which govern a great part of the world. But as he finds me a little unwilling to resign my immortality, he has furnished me with a system of transmigration, and the eternal wandering of the soul from one species of being to another.

However, I do not find myself a gainer by renouncing my creed, which allowed me to hope, that, after the period of this mortal life, I might be an angel, or at least equal to those bright essences.

But by this fantastic scheme, to which my brother is making me a convert, my pretensions are sunk: the utmost I can expect, when I have shifted my present existence, is, to grin in a monkey, or look demure in a broad-faced owl, or to sit a chattering magpye in a bush. It is a chance among which of the animal race I am to be numbered; whether I shall mount the air with the winged inhabitants, or crawl on the earth among my brother reptiles, or graze in the meadows with the horned tribe. Indeed I have no great stomach to grass or hay, and as little inclination to sleep in a den, or stretch my hairy bulk on the dewy plain: but as it is yet uncertain, whether I am to stalk or fly, or swim, I am still at a loss which of these various clans to greet as my next kindred.

However, I am better pleased with being what I am, than any thing else. I had rather be a celebrated toast, fluttering at a ball among beaux and pretty fellows, than the most gaudy butterfly hovering with painted wings over a bed of tulips. If this should be my ensuing fate, it will be a mortifying descent from a goddess to an insect.

And really there is something so gloomy and uncomfortable in those prospects of faturity, that if I consider them much longer, I shall turn Christian again, in defiance of my brother, and a learned unbeliever his companion, who are perpetually ridiculing my concern about a visionary hereafter, as they term it.

Indeed this would be the least of my cares, were I not extremely at leisure; but as I am, it is impossible for me to avoid being solicitous what fate attends me, when I resign this transitory life: for I must certainly die; I am mortal beyond contradiction; this truth sits heavy on my soul; there is no flying its evidence, nor does this place afford any amusement, to divert the gloomy reflection. If I should turn devotee, you would think it a more wonderful metamorphosis than any I have named. But in all changes I am constantly

Yours, &c.

LAURA.

P. S. I have a secret to tell you concerning my brother, which you shall know in my next letter; for I am as impatient to discover it, as you can be to hear it.

L E T T E R II.

I Have too much confidence in my dear Aurelia, to conceal any thing from her; nor can it be an injury to my brother to trust you with his character, and know him to be as great a libertine in his practice as his principles.

But in whatever freedoms he has indulged himself, I must own he has always endeavoured to give me a just sense of honour, and the decorum due to my sex. While he has taken pains to free me from the restraints of religion, he has left nothing unsaid on other motives, that might raise in me the tenderest concern for a clear reputation. Which made me the more resent his scandalous conduct, when I found he had a mistress in his house, whom he had sent hither two or three days before we came. I knew not what to do, nor how to behave myself in this exigence, till I found she was rather an object of compassion than reproach; and that she came hither, not to indulge an infamous amour, but to shelter herself from want, and the resentment of her relations.

She told me the story of her misfortunes, as well

as

as the distress and confusion she was in would permit ; and, asking me a thousand pardons, ingenuously owned she had engaged my brother to bring me with him, or not to follow her.

I found her education had been strictly modest, and that she was unacquainted with the vicious part of the world. She is hardly sixteen ; her name Charlotte ; the only child of a noted citizen, who was utterly ruined in his affairs by a crafty Jew. From the height of credit, the unhappy man found himself sunk into circumstances of disgrace and indigence.

This was a melancholy turn to Charlotte ; just in the vanity of youthful expectations, to find herself, from the affluence of fortune, so suddenly reduced to poverty and contempt. My brother (whom she had sometimes seen with her father, but knew nothing of his character) took this unfortunate crisis to tempt her with rich presents, and fair promises, to leave her friends, and retire to some private lodgings he had got for her.

In this distraction of affairs, her father being under an arrest, and all his effects seized, she was surprised into a compliance with my brother's proposal : nor did he give her time to reflect, or consult any of her relations ; who soon got intelligence of this dishonour, and sent her a severe injunction to see their faces no more.

This cruel message, with the sad tidings of her mother's death that followed, and the full evidence that she was deluded by my brother with feigned promises of marriage, had almost proved fatal to her life ; nor could any argument allay her sorrow till her distressed lover engaged never to ask any future favour of her, but what the nicest virtue may grant. On this condition, she consented to go to his new seat in the country ; for indeed she has no other refuge. He has kept his promise ; she lodges in my apartment, and is treated by him with as much decency as if she was his sister.

I never thought such a libertine would turn Platonic : it is an unusual refinement, and I believe,
the

the first gallantry of this kind he ever practised. But he has an esteem, a tenderness for her, of which, by his dissolute manners, I always fancied him incapable.

Her behaviour is really modest ; nor was there ever a more natural impression of truth and innocence, than appears in her face. Her too credulous temper, and unexperienced years, have betrayed her into this state of shame and misery ; of which, though too late, she seems exquisitely sensible. Since I began this letter, she came into my closet, and, with a flood of tears, begged me to contrive some way to free her from this dangerous place.

“ But whether (she said) can I fly ! My friends
“ will never receive me ; nor have I the confidence
“ to meet their reproaches. My crime has sent a
“ tender mother weeping to her grave, it loads
“ my father’s hoary head with a heavier weight
“ of sorrow than all his other misfortunes. Love
“ was not my excuse ; I am yet a stranger to that
“ passion : it was a cowardice, it was fear of poverty. A criminal distrust of celestial Providence. I should have begged, I should have starved, rather than parted with my innocence, on such mercenary terms. However sincere my repentance is, it can signify nothing with regard to the world. The scandal will never be obliterated. I must either face the public contempt, or waste my days in a joyless obscurity. Put my condition in the best light ; would this false man, as he promised, marry me ; what opprobrious language, what terms of infamy, must I expect, in his intervals of chagrin ! Besides this, the impiety of his conversation terrifies me, while I hear him make a jest of those sacred subjects for which I have been taught the highest veneration. I should live happier with a wild American.”

I made no reply ; the reasoning was too just to admit a contradiction. But this melancholy instance makes me more than ever resolved not to surrender,

surrender, nor even capitulate, on any terms, but those of a lawful English wife. Adieu.

LAURA.

L E T T E R I I I .

W^Hat mutable things we are ! You will be surprised to hear I am grown fond of the country, and have acquired a relish for its harmless delights. I can talk to an echo, or listen with great attention to a purling stream. I am in a fair way to make garlands, invoke the muses, and write pastorals. Since you heard last from me, I have met with an agreeable adventure that has given a sort of romantic turn to my imagination.

As I was taking my constant diversion of riding on the downs, the evening being exceeding pleasant, I wandered some miles beyond my usual limites, till I came in sight of a venerable pile of building, which could be distinguished from a church by nothing but the want of a steeple ; every thing about it had an air of grandeur and antiquity. At some distance from the house there was a thick wood, with several fine walks cut through it.

I had a great inclination to ramble in those agreeable shades ; and alighting, ordered my footman to wait at the place where I left him. It was not long before I came to the centre of the forest, in which was a large grass-plot of a circular figure, with a double row of high elms growing in the same form round it. In the middle of the green was a little mount, that, by easy steps of turf, had a winding ascent to the top ; where stood an arbour of jessamine, woodbine, and roses, twisted together with a sort of elegant disorder. The gaudy blossoms pleased the sight, while their mingled sweets perfumed the ambient air. On the lower branches of the circling elms hung several gilt cages, with a variety of singing birds in them, which were now chanting their evening-songs, while

while a musical flagellet, in clear and shrill responses, answered from the delicious arbour.

I began to think there were indeed such things as enchanted forests and vocal groves, or that the great Spirit of nature was solacing itself in those innocent abodes. However, female curiosity led me on, till I came to the charming bower ; where I found a well dressed beautiful youth, of about seventeen, sitting with a flagellet in his hand. His complexion was a lively brunette, that disgraced the lily and the roses ; his dark hair fell in large and graceful curls below his neck ; nothing could be more elegant than his shape and feature ; nor was there any meeting the splendour of his eyes, without being sensible of every darting glance.

I made some apology for my intrusion ; which he answered with an easy natural civility. Nor could I perceive that my presence gave him the least surprise or confusion. He received me with perfect composure, nor seemed to have any manner of curiosity to know whence I came, or whether I was going ; nor (to my great mortification) did he so much as ask whether I was a mortal or a god-des.

It gave me some uneasiness, I confess, to find myself no more an object of surprise, to one who perhaps had never seen any thing so fine in his life : for I was in a very rich habit, blazing with scarlet and gold. You cannot imagine how it humbled my vanity, to observe with what indolence and tranquillity the young insensible looked at me ; and the more, because he did not seem to want wit or politeness. I was extremely vexed, that at three and twenty he should treat me with as much indifference and respect, as if I had been his great-grand mother.

This sedateness gave me a curiosity to pry into his studies : for I saw two books lie near the place where he sat. When I opened them, I found one was, *A discourse of the government of the passions* ; the other, *A treatise of the immortality of the soul*. I had nothing to say on those grave subjects ; but
after

after some formal discourse of the fine situation of the place, I took my leave of it; the young philosopher attending me to the limits of the wood, where I left my servant; and there we parted, without any seeming reluctance on either side.

But I own I had a restless curiosity to know the history of this lovely youth, and to whom the house belonged. Nor was it long before I received satisfaction from a clergyman that was riding the same road with me. He said, "The mansion was
" Sir Harry Lizzard's, a man of merit, and well
" acquainted with the world; at which he was now
" unreasonably disgusted, and grown solitary, on
" the account of the death of his eldest son, to
" whom he had given a very liberal education,
" and with a generous allowance sent him into
" Italy; where his time was spent in the most dis-
" solute manner; till being unhappily engaged
" with a lewd woman, in a fit of jealousy he shot
" himself through the head. This tragical event
" made Sir Harry resolve to give his younger son
" a quite different education. Indeed his charac-
" ter is entirely the reverse of his elder brother's:
" he is remarkable for his early piety, and great
" proficiency in all sorts of learning, having a
" very polite and ingenious person for his tutor.
" But Philocles, that is the younger gentleman's
" name, has too great an allay of gravity for his
" early years, and is of so retired a temper, that
" he is known by the title of *The handsome hermit*,
" as he is indeed very handsome."

Here the clergyman left me, overjoyed with this intelligence. As soon as I got home, I related my adventure to Charlotte; who gave me but little attention, being, as I told you, in the utmost anxiety at the manner of life to which she was confined. I am,

Dear Aurelia,

Most sincerely yours, &c.

LAURA.

L E T T E R IV.

Since you received my last letter, I have taken another ramble in Sir Harry Lizzard's forest. My brother knows nothing of this adventure. And the first afternoon that I found him engaged, I persuaded Charlotte to go with me; who was glad of any pretence to fly from her own gallant, though she expressed but little curiosity to see mine.

At the entrance of the grove, we left the servants to wait with our horses till we returned. In my first visit, I perceived, by Philocles' discourse, that, when the evening was fair, he constantly spent it in the charming bower; where we now found him reading Dr Young's *True estimate of human Life*, with such attention, he did not immediately see us, and seemed surprised at the encounter.

It diverted me, to find his philosophy discomposed. I began to flatter myself, it was the effect of my charms. The hopes of such a conquest delighted me more than all my past victories. It gave a sudden vivacity to my thoughts; and resolving by my wit to secure the conquest of my eyes, I began, with great gaiety, to rally him on his recluse manner of life, and losing his gayest hours in a joyless solitude.

By this time the young Stoic had assumed his natural superiority; and, instead of replying, as I expected, in a gallant and modish strain, he talked to me of the satisfactions of virtue, the tranquillity of the mind in the rectitude of its passions; themes which, from another person, would have composed me better than a dose of laudanum. But here,

—————“ The grave rebuke,
 “ Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
 “ Invincible.—————

Like the fallen angel in Milton,

—————“ Abash'd I stood,
 “ And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
 “ Virtue how lovely in her native shape!”

The

The glory that darted from his eyes, the agreeable accent, the moving eloquence that flowed from those rosy lips, commanded my whole attention. Had he preached a sermon, I could patiently have listened to the blooming orator,

————— “ From morn to noon,
“ From noon to dewy eve, a summer’s day.”

Milton.

And yet I could not forbear sometimes laughing at his gravity, and begging he would put himself into holy orders. But he was not to be rallied out of his sobriety. Nor could I possibly draw from him that flattery, with which till now I had been addressed. He seemed rather to have an inclination to humble my vanity.

Charlotte, the whole time, sat in a pensive silence, while the tears which she strove to conceal, would sometimes drop from her eyes. Philocles, in every pause of conversation, surveyed her with looks that expressed great humanity: but I was in no disposition to be jealous of any thing I looked on so inferior to myself.

However, my concern to conceal this affair from my brother, made me break off the conversation a little abruptly, that we might be at home at the usual hour. As soon as ever we were got alone, I asked Charlotte how she liked the *handsome hermit*. “ Oh (said she, with a tender emotion) that I had never seen him! Till now I was not sensible of the injury this barbarian (your brother) has done me. He has cut me off from all the lawful joys of life, from the pleasure of a reciprocal affection for a man of worth and virtue. With my innocence I lost a right to that happiness. What! am I a prostitute! a kept mistress! your brother’s ———! O infamy! your brother’s wh—e!”

“ If you had not been that (said I) Charlotte, you had been a beggar.”

“ O envied title! (she replied); O glorious Poverty! thou hast been the choice of saints and heroes; Virtue has made thee her sanctuary, her

“ peaceful retreat. I could have fed on whole-
“ some vegetables, quenched my thirst at some
“ crystal brook, indulged my harmless slumbers on
“ the verdant turf, undisturbed with guilty fears.
“ Pardon me (said she, recollecting herself) these
“ passionate sallies. I find myself more than ever
“ undone, condemned to waste my hours in sullen
“ obscurity ; in the pride of life, the bloom of soft
“ desires, to languish in solitary despair! My con-
“ science will not suffer me to gratify an unlaw-
“ ful passion : nor should any advantage (were
“ my guilt a secret) persuade me to impose on a
“ man of worth. I have been true even to this
“ rake that has undone me, and frustrated all my
“ hopes of a lawful happiness.”

“ That is my brother has spoiled your marriage,
“ (said I). But, dear Charlotte, why should that
“ thought afflict you, who intend to pass your
“ future time in penitence and retirement ? Has
“ the *handsome hermit* altered your pious resolu-
“ tions ?”

“ No, (she replied) ; he has rather confirmed
“ them. Never had the cause of virtue a more
“ resistless advocate. Methinks I see the beauty
“ that lightened in his face ; I hear the charm-
“ ing accent still ; I felt the energy of his argu-
“ ments ; my soul gave its full assent to the cele-
“ stial dictates. I wondered you could so often
“ interrupt the graceful orator with your ill-timed
“ raillery. I could have listened to his lecture of
“ morality till the midnight-dews had fallen, till
“ the stars had set.”

“ Dear Charlotte, (said I), forgive this interrup-
“ tion ; I find you are in love. My intention is
“ entirely frustrated, of having your picture drawn
“ as the Fair Penitent, with a lamp and prayer-
“ book before you. I perceive you design yet to
“ converse among sinful mortals. Will you go
“ with me to-morrow, to hear another lecture
“ from the charming divine ?”

“ Rather (she replied) let me retire to the silent
“ grave, to conceal my infamy. I would not de-
“ ceive

“ ceive him with an air of innocence while I am
“ conscious of my own dishonour. I know my-
“ self; this is the crisis of my misery; nothing
“ can obliterate this secret sense of shame. I may
“ retire from the public view, as it is my full re-
“ solution. But what is a resolution at sixteen?
“ Without peculiar assistance from Heaven, I shall
“ never conquer the dictates of love and nature.
“ In this perplexity I must either marry some
“ worthless wretch that knows my infamy, or de-
“ ceive some man of merit to whom it is a secret.”

Here she burst into a flood of tears, intreating me to write to an uncle she had, to receive her into his favour, and let her live privately in his family. This I promised; nor despair of prevailing. My concern for her makes me forget it is time to subscribe myself

Your humble servant,

LAURA.

LETTER V.

Charlotte, to her great satisfaction, has this morning left us, and is gone to her uncle; who was easily persuaded to receive her, after he was assured of the sincerity of her penitence. But I found it a harder task to prevail with my brother to resign the idol of his affections; though he lost nothing by her absence, but the pleasure of gazing on her.

I am in pain till you know the sequel of my adventure with Philocles; who since I writ last, has several times, by appointment, met me in the delicious bower: but still, to my great vexation, he appeared insensible of any tender impression. I could discern nothing in his conversation, but a pious design to convert me to Christianity, and convince me of the folly of the new scheme to which my brother had made me a proselyte.

But the last time we met I observed a soft confusion in his looks, till, after a long pause, (which I had no mind to interrupt), “I am going (said he)

“ to

“ to set myself in a very ridiculous light to one
“ of your character : but I am content to pass for
“ an enthusiast, till the event convinces you of
“ the truth of what I shall relate.

“ If a domestic tradition may be credited, there
“ has no person died out of our family, but what
“ has had a warning of their approaching fate,
“ by hearing music passing through the house in
“ the dead silence of the night ; which is heard
“ by none but the person concerned. My mother
“ and sister both foretold their own death from
“ this presage. I see you smile, (continued Philo-
“ cles) : but I have had the same warning, and
“ am superstitious enough to credit it. Last night
“ some trifling disorder kept me waking ; my
“ thoughts, however, were placid and serene :
“ some verses I had heard my sister repeat in her
“ last sickness came fresh into my memory.

“ While night in solemn triumph reigns,
“ Ascend, my soul the heav’nly plains ;
“ Thy flight to those gay regions take :
“ Angels and God are still awake.
“ The smiling stars will light thy way
“ To the gladsome realms of day ;
“ While drowsy men with idle themes,
“ Fantastic joys, and airy dreams,
“ Are entertain’d ; do thou converse
“ With heav’n, and heav’nly strains rehearse ;
“ Visit the peaceful climes above,
“ And through the fields of pleasure rove ;
“ Forget the scenes of care and strife,
“ And walk among the trees of life ;
“ Taste the rich fruits of paradise,
“ And bathe in flowing streams of bliss :
“ Solac’d in those eternal springs,
“ Lose ev’ry thought of mortal things.

“ Just as I had repeated these verses, I was se-
“ renaded by an invisible musician, with the sweet-
“ est strains that ever delighted mortal ears. The
“ harmonious echo seemed to pass from room to
“ room till it came into my chamber ; where, af-
“ ter

"ter a short space, it sunk away in a gentle cadence.

"I knew my obsequies were now sung, and heard the fatal summons without surprise. Death was a theme familiar to my thoughts, as I neither expected or desired to reach the decline of life."

I listened to this story as to a fairy tale, or a sort of waking dream. As gravely as he told it, I could not forbear laughing.

"This, Madam, (said he), is what I expected; but it will not make me less serious on a subject of such importance. You have often rallied me on a manner of life so unsuitable to my years. Perhaps it may be more the effect of reason than inclination. My brother's tragical end convinced me of the fatal effects of love, and made me resolve never to admit that distracting passion to my breast. But whatever opposition I have made, my heart has not been insensible of your charms, nor with all my philosophy sufficiently guarded against the allurements of love and soft desire. Even now, when I find myself disengaged from every other care, I have the utmost solicitude for your happiness. I am distressed to leave you in this state of infidelity; for this is the last interview we shall have, unless I am permitted to make you a visit from the immortal regions, in order to convince you, that the hopes of Christianity are no delusion."

"This proposal (said I) charms me. There would be no resisting such evidence. I hope you will prove a ghost of honour, and not fail the assignation; which on my side shall be punctually kept, on condition you appear in open daylight, and dressed in your celestial finery. With these circumstances I may venture to promise you, neither to run away, nor fall into fits. The place of your reception (though not perhaps suitable to your future dignity) shall be a painted alcove, fronting a walk shaded with limes at the end of my brother's garden."

"The

“ The gaiety (replied Philocles) with which you
 “ treat this subject, persuades me you have courage
 “ enough to be as good as your word ; which
 “ is the last and only favour I have to ask. I must
 “ now bid you farewell, and, in the retirement of
 “ my closet, prepare to make my exit with a for-
 “ titude becoming those sacred principles to which
 “ I have adhered.”

Here, with a tender confusion in his looks, he abruptly left the place, and gave me leisure to reflect on the odd conversation that had passed. But as visionary as some part of it appears, I would fain believe the soft confession he made is no fiction ; for I find myself excessively in love. But this shall be a secret to the young enthusiast, till he has got over this splenetic fit ; which, as whimsical as it appears, gives me a secret uneasiness. He has certainly infected me with some religious panics. I have lost my taste for every kind of diversion. Company is molesting, and solitude tiresome. Self-reflection distracts me. Whether I look forward or backward, the prospect is all confusion. But I shall expose myself, by owning these weaknesses to one of your character. Adieu, &c.

LAURA.

L E T T E R VI.

OH, my Aurelia ! I have surprising things to tell you ! The lovely Philocles is dead. His pre-
 sages were too certain. About a week after our last interview, I heard the melancholy tidings, that Sir Harry Lizzard had lost his only son by a sudden death. The charming youth was impatient of mortality, and is gone to converse with his kindred angels.

You will wonder to hear me treat those subjects seriously which I have till now ridiculed. It is a change that I myself can hardly credit. I never imagined my inclinations were so tenderly engaged, nor that any kind of adversity could have made such an alteration on my temper.

After

After the first emotions of grief were over, I recollected the appointment we had made ; but rather wished than believed such an interview possible. However, my mind was prepared for conviction. I began to reason with Cato,

———“ If there’s a power above,
He must delight in virtue ;
And that which he delights in must be happy.”

I found myself now interested in the truths of Christianity. The firm belief of a life everlasting would in this exigence have been my greatest consolation. My hopes and fears prevailed by intervals, and kept me in the most tormenting suspense, while I waited for the decisive hour. As soon as it came, without any consternation, I attended at the appointed place.

It was a charming retreat, where art and luxurious nature displayed their various beauties. The evening was still ; the sun in golden splendor, descending to the western skies, glittered through the trees. Every thing looked gay ; new life and beauty appeared on all the vernal prospect ; the plants put on a fresher green, the flowers displayed a brighter hue, and diffused ambrosial fragrancy. Nature seemed animated with a conscious joy, as gladdened at the approach of some heavenly power.

An unusual alacrity inspired my thoughts, and soothed my soul with a secret delight ; while a soft melodious sound, rising by just degrees, filled the region round with transporting harmony.

In the height of these agreeable agitations, as the rosy morning breaks from a cloud, the charming Philocles stood apparent before me. There was something in his aspect so serene and beneficent, such a sweetness and affability, that banished every thought of fear, and filled my breast with divine tranquillity. Ineffable pleasure sparkled in his eyes ; youth in eternal triumph sat on his brow, and painted his face with a rosy bloom. His temples were circled with a wreath of celestial roses ;

R r

which

which were mingled among his flowing hair with a sort of ornamental negligence.

After a short pause, he began with a voice that would have allayed the anguish of death, and charmed the wildest discord into calm attention; every accent breathed celestial love and harmony, while he described the bowers of bliss, the soft recesses and mansions of immortal pleasure. But it is impossible for me to paint the beautiful ideas, or imitate the emphasis of his language. The powers of eloquence sat on his tongue, and commanded all the motions of my soul, which at that blissful period seemed enlarged in its superior faculties; every word was penetrating and significant, his manner perfectly graceful and transporting; in his descriptions I saw the glories, I felt the joys of immortality. But in the midst of my attention to the sparkling orator, I could not help observing, that he often cast his eye on the shadow of a dial, which was placed on the top of a little marble-pedestal, on which, with a becoming gesture, he leaned with his right hand. I fancied his time was limited; for at the last glance I saw him cast on the dial, he vanished, and with him all my joys.

This momentary view of celestial beauty has obscured all earthly glory. Never will the sun disclose a scene of pleasure to my sight; the vanities which lately amused me, have lost their charms; my thoughts are fixed on superior objects; a divine and immortal ardour inspires my soul, and determines all its motions. With the evidence I now have of a future existence, my notions of happiness are refined and enlarged, my hopes bright and unlimited.

Adieu, my dear Aurelia! I am not without hopes, that this relation will have the same effect on your practice, as the heavenly vision has on that of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

LAURA.

Amoret

Amoret to Corfica.

From the black regions, from the mournful
plains,

Where horror in eternal triumph reigns ;
From the low caves of hell, the dens of night,
Far from the frontiers of celestial light ;
This from the wretched Amoret receive,
And at my cost these dreadful truths believe ;

That 'tis no fiction pious men adore,
But there's indeed a just almighty Pow'r ;
That human spirits after death survive,
And to interminable ages live ;
That fields of light, and blest ethereal plains,
Are no conceits of visionary brains :
But there are happy bowers, and shades of love,
With pure exhaustless springs of joy above ;
Immortal crowns the virt'ous to reward,
And glorious triumphs for the just prepar'd.

Nor question the surprising truths I tell,
While I the secrets of the deep reveal :
For hell is no enthusiastic dream,
No statesman's trick, nor poets fab'lous theme ;
No pious fraud, or mercenary lie
Of subtle priests, to gain the conscience by.
'Tis all too sadly true which they maintain,
And far beyond whate'er the poets feign,
Of streams of liquid fire, and burning lakes,
Infernal gibbets, and eternal racks, }
Gorgons, chimeras, furies, and their snakes.
No mortal can a just conception frame,
Nor find for half the terrors here a name.

Then shun the flow'ry paths that downward tend ;
To hell they lead, and in damnation end.
Fly from the snares of that enchanting sin,
Whose fatal joys have my perdition been.

Like thee, with all the pride of beauty gay,
In loose delights, I lately spent the day ;
Like thee accomplish'd, and like thee admir'd,
My eyes the savage and polite inspir'd,

Whene'er I spoke, my wit new conquests won ;
 Thousands come here, by my soft airs undone,
 With wild surprise, my alter'd looks they view,
 And with loud curses still my flight pursue.
 For learn, before too late, licentious fair,
 Each face does here an equal horror wear,
 And undistinguish'd youth and age appear.
 Depriv'd of ev'ry charm, and ev'ry grace,
 We all descend to this detested place.
 Illustrious Helen, once the Grecian pride,
 In folding shades her hated form would hide ;
 And conscious Thais fears to be descry'd.
 I saw them lately by the trembling gleams,
 The pale blue light of inauspicious flames ;
 No blushes paint their cheeks, their wanton eyes
 No more with love's contagious darts surprise.
 Rasth Cleopatra mourns her hasty doom,
 And glides a hideous spectre through the gloom,
 Fam'd Julia thro' the crowd's no longer known ;
 Ev'n Ovid's eyes her blasted charms disown.

Curs'd be the arts that did my soul betray,
 And lead my easy virtue first astray.
 'Tis past—and my repentance comes too late,
 But thou may'st yet avoid this cruel fate.
 Perfidious beauty, quit the roads of vice ;
 Its smooth descents to certain death entice.
 Like Dives, from th' infernal coasts I send,
 To warn my careless unbelieving friend.
 For thou, while yet a lovely guiltless maid,
 To sin, by my example, was betray'd :
 And shouldst thou to these mournful regions come,
 'T would vastly aggravate my heavy doom.

To Gleone.

From the bright realms, and happy fields above,
 The seats of pleasure and immortal love,
 Where joys no more on airy chance depend,
 All health to thee from those gay climes I send.
 For thee my tender passion is the same,
 Nor death itself has quench'd the noble flame :

For

For charms like thine for ever fix the mind,
And with eternal obligations bind.
And when kind fate shall my Cleone free
From the dull fetters of mortality,
I'll meet thy parting soul, and guide my fair
In triumph, through the lightsome fields of air,
Till thou shalt gain the blissful seats and bow'rs,
And shining plains, deck'd with unfading flow'rs,
There nobler heights our friendship shall improve,
For flames like ours bright spirits feel above,
And tune their golden harps to the soft notes of
love. }
The sacred subject swells each heav'nly breast,
And in their looks its transports are exprest.

F I N I S.



